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47th

BOMB GROUP (L)





"DOUGLAS A-20B HAVOC"
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TURNER PUBLISHING COMPANY
Paducah, Kentucky



TURNER PUBLISHING COMPANY

412 Broadway
P.O. Box 3101
Paducah, KY 42002-3101
(502) 443-0121

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Turner Publishing Company Staff:

Editor: Erik Parrent

Designer: Lora Ann Lauder

Library of Congress

Catalog Card Number: 96-060365

ISBN: 1-56311-240-X

Printed in the United States of America

Additional copies may be purchased directly from Turner Publishing Company.

Cover Photo: 97th Squadron, 47th Bomb Group over North Africa

Endsheets: Courtesy of 47th Bomb Group

This publication was compiled using available information. The publisher regrets it cannot assume liability for errors or omissions.



Back Row, L to R: D. T. Smith, O.E. Robinson, G. Penix, R. R. Patterson, J. E. Miles, K. R. Mitchell, H. B. Simpson, W. B. Maxwell, M. Kahan. Front Row, L to R: I. Herman, H. J. Laudig, Commanding Officer- George L. Robinson, F. R. Knosse, J. L. Lambert. Hammer Field, Fresno, California, February 11, 1942, A-20-C, 86th Bomb Squadron



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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to all those of the 47th Bombardment Group (I) who gave their lives in performance of their duties, in the air, on the ground or at sea, and to those who always gave their best efforts and survived, in support of the Allied war efforts of World War II.

They were a cross section of America; they came from every state in the Union, from all walks of life, from the "old men" (mid-40s) to the kids (late teens) who were to become men before their time. They were a close knit, cohesive group, there was no task too big, no task too small, no mission too dangerous. They were not always of one mind, but ever of one goal, to get the job done and go home to a world of peace.

To the air crews who, day after day, then night after night (when the group converted to night operations), flew into the face of the enemy, braving the intense fire of his antiaircraft guns and attacks from enemy fighters, to deliver "bombs on target" many times within a few hundred yards of friendly troops and in desert or in rugged mountainous terrain where targets were difficult to identify. There were times when they flew multiple missions in one day. To these brave men, we give a proud salute. And to those few Royal Air Force "Chaps" who flew with us early on and shared their veteran experiences and knowledge of desert type operations, we say, "Thank you, a jolly good show."

To those who stayed on the ground and toiled endlessly, often in the blistering sun, the numbing cold, the rain and the mud, to maintain, repair, refuel and load the airplanes, then greet them on their return and start the cycle all over again. The miracles they performed with limited tools, c-ration tins, a few rivets and some wire were utterly amazing. This they did even with interruptions from bombings and strafing by enemy planes. To them a firm thumbs up and a resounding note of thanks.

No air crew came home to find their ground crew missing from the appointed spot, but at times the ground crew waited in vain for "their air crew" to come home, listening and watching in hopes of hearing that familiar sound or seeing that speck in the sky evolve into their own airplane, but finally forced into conceding they weren't coming. To all of them, a warm and hardy salute, especially from the air crews.

To all who worked mainly outside the limelight of wartime publicity, planning missions, cooking, typing, filing, providing transportation, intelligence, mission and target photos and interpretation, weather, medical care, payroll, religious counseling and services of all kinds, a big round of applause and appreciation which was too infrequently expressed. They labored night and day, generally unnoticed - asking for little and receiving less - yet, they were the life support member for the war machine on the flying field; without them, it could not continue to function.

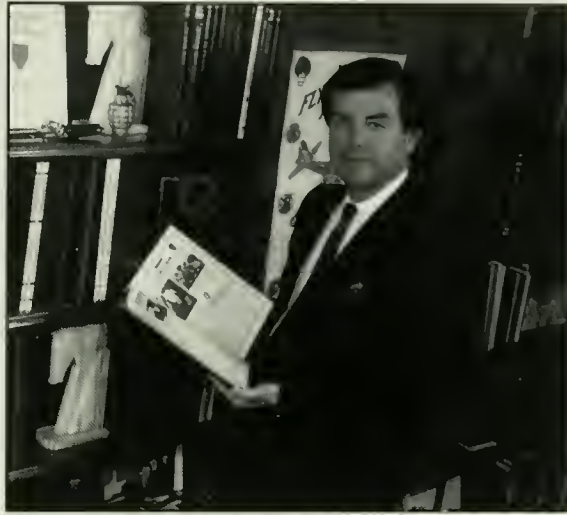
A very special salute to Major General Fred Terrell, our Commander who led us through our formative and training stages, through our early months of the war and for his continued support from his assignments up the line - he never forgot us, and we shall never forget him.

To all these gallant men - and to their loved ones left behind - for a while or forever - a grateful nation says, "Thank you, for a job well done."

This book is an effort to provide a window through which families, friends, loved ones and others, for generations to come, may look back in time to a slice of life as it was for the members of the 47th Bombardment Group (I) when they were a part of writing the history - of this nation and the world - being studied in the institutions of learning and the libraries of today and tomorrow.

Marion J. Akers
Col. USAF, Ret.

PUBLISHER'S MESSAGE



*Dave Turner, President
Turner Publishing Company*

Let me be the first to express my admiration for the men of the 47th Bomb Group. Due to their actions throughout Northern Africa, throughout Italy, and elsewhere, let them be known for their skill, their precision, their dedication, and their courage.

I served in the Air Force myself in the 1960s. My brother gave his life in service to his country in Vietnam. My oldest son has joined the ranks of the military, as well. So I understand the kind of commitment involved; my respect for those who make this commitment, and then give their all to fulfill it, knows no bounds.

Let me express my thanks to all the members of the 47th Bomb Group, for their participation helping to make this book project a reality, and more importantly, for coming to the defense of their country when their country called.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dave Turner". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Dave Turner
President



Courtesy of Chester O. Taylor

47TH BOMB GROUP



47TH BOMB GROUP (L)

An informal narrative history of the 47th Bombardment Group.

Originally prepared and given by Major General Frederick R. Terrell to the Group at its reunion in Dayton, Ohio, 1979.

Revised and supplemented by Colonel Marion J. Akers and given to the Group 1996.

About one year before the Pearl Harbor attack, the 47th was constituted as the 47th Bombardment Group (Light) on November 20, 1940. On January 15, 1941, the Group was activated and cadres for Headquarters and three tactical squadrons, the 84th, the 85th and the 86th, were manned by experienced personnel at McChord Field, Washington out of the 17th Bombardment Group. Likewise the 20th Reconnaissance Squadron, later to become the 97th Bombardment Squadron, was manned at the same place out of the 89th Reconnaissance Squadron. In the spring of 1941 the 47th Group, with all squadrons was designated for station at Fresno, California as soon as buildings were available at the new Hammer Field east of that city.

So much for the record. What follows is an informal narrative, highlights of events experienced by members of the 47th. Much of this story is told in the first person.

Some two hundred members of the new group with a few B-18 aircraft left McChord and arrived in Fresno during July 1941. There we were joined by several hundred new airmen who were screened, selected and sent to various schools for training in their chosen fields, and we were fortunate to get them back after their training was completed.

Out of Fresno base we flew many search missions over the deserts of the Southwest United States and into Mexico looking for, and finding some, lost ferry pilots (who were flying new aircraft from Southern California factories). We also engaged in infantry training over at Fort Ord, California. There, some of our pilots got

Jeeps airborne, but none for more than a few seconds. Then: December 7, 1941 - Pearl Harbor!

Within hours of the attack a 47th Group task force flying a newly augmented strength of B-18 aircraft deployed into Hamilton Field above San Francisco. We loaded our own bombs long into the night. By dawn of the next day we were 300 miles out over the ocean to sweep the near Pacific waters for Japanese naval vessels. This task force, the first to perform ocean reconnaissance in the war from the United States consisted of all the B-18's from west of the Mississippi, all 16 of them. These ocean patrols continued until the end of December. The 85th Squadron took over the job from Sacramento Airport. Bombs were in such short supply in those days that we landed back at home base with our live bombs. Long into the month the 85th was still carrying the same bomb loads originally hoisted-up that first night at Hamilton Field.

About the 11th of December the 97th Squadron started receiving a few four-engine aircraft from several corners of the world; six or eight planes in all. These were modified B-24s and LB-30s. British air sea reconnaissance version of the Consolidated Aircraft Company's B-24. These fine aircraft were dispatched on long range missions, some more than halfway to Hawaii and return to Fresno.

Finally came the happy day in late December when we turned over all ocean reconnaissance to others and collected our first A-20's from the Douglas factory, Clover Field, Santa Monica, California. It turned out that the first aircraft, about 48 of them, we flew home had been ear-marked for our Allies, the British, French and/or Russians. No matter, we flew these to dispersal at Las Vegas, Nevada. From there we flew off with a new bunch of our own. We were then told to drop out the bomb racks on these A-20's and mount a big torpedo sling. This was for the United States Navy's monstrous Mark XIII, or similar number, torpedo. Oh, oh,

Australia here we come! We no sooner had every pilot making dry runs with newly installed torpedo directing mounts and instruments than we were told, "...put back the bomb racks, you're going to Oklahoma." This move took most of February.

Will Rogers Field, our new home, is at Oklahoma City. We entered on a period of intensive training here, because very soon after arrival we lost 12 of our 16 most experienced officers to other units mainly B-17 and B-24. The new squadron commanders then chosen had each less than three years service. But, they were to prove themselves more than worthy within the next few months and later in combat. We received also new air crew members, gunners fresh from mechanics and gunnery schools. Here, too, top notch young pilots joined us. They were diverted from the B-17 copilot training program and some had been through the United Airlines Instrument Training School in Denver. They volunteered to come and were happy to have a pilot's seat all their own. There were some tragic crashes during this training period and sadly we lost several fine young air crewmen. A universal experience in wartime, we later learned. While at Will Rogers, newly acquired young engineering officers started earning their keep, and more. Many other specialists also found their niche including Chaplain "Father Ed" Czeslowski later to become Chief AF Chaplain in the late 1960s as Major General Chess. In early July 1942 we moved from Oklahoma into the Southeast United States at Greensboro, North Carolina.

The Greensboro-Highpoint Airport was in pine-wooded hill country about midway between these two North Carolina cities. The 47th Group spent the summer here participating in the gigantic Carolina Maneuvers living in tents deep in the woods. Thus we began our three years of outdoor life.

From the Carolina woods we were ordered overseas. By telephone we were told to write our own orders—destination "Secret." It worked out just fine. At that time all those headed for "Secret" were given priority treatment at each stop-over. A few air crews flew off each day to Kansas City, Missouri to pick up brand new A-20 B's, modified for long range over-water flight, just as fast as the modification center there could turn them out. From Kansas City we flew on to Westover Field, Massachusetts for overseas processing. In late August the Group's advanced echelon consisting mainly of the Operations staffs departed the woods for Fort Dix, New Jersey for staging and then New York to embark on the *Queen Mary* for Scotland and England. At Fort Dix four officers, veterans of World War I, joined us. These volunteer "retreads" headed our Intelligence staff and mature, wise men were never more appreciated. Our ground support and maintenance echelons were last to leave the woods for overseas staging area. They then proceeded to embarkation aboard ship in New York Harbor to sail to North Africa. In November 1942 we all came together again at Casablanca, French Morocco except for eight officers and 319 enlisted men of the rear echelon who finally caught up with us March 29, 1943 at Canrobert, Algeria.

The advanced echelon aboard the *Queen Mary* made a fast crossing. After having trav-



Combat crews of the 97th Squadron, 47th Bomb Group. (Courtesy of Ted Kuhlman)

eled from Greensboro to Fort Dix to the waterfront in New York Harbor and then aboard ship (can't tell you the name of the ship, it's super, super secret), they found themselves as part of 16,500 troops onboard the *Queen Mary*. They sailed out of New York Harbor in mid-afternoon—bright sunshine, bands playing, crowds cheering and waving to the troops lining the ship decks, fire boats throwing huge streams of water as escorts past the Statue of Liberty to the open seas. Later that evening the ship's captain briefed all troop commanders to keep their men away from the ship's railings. We would stop for no one who fell overboard. Later on that night they were informed, by *Axis Sally* in her broadcast, of the sailing time, the number of troops and their units on board and they had been sunk by German submarines off the New Jersey coast (everything correct except for the sinking). Bon Voyage! The great ship, unescorted, steamed at full speed and was directed in course changes from England in a way which avoided enemy submarines. These course changes were abrupt and without warning. One evening in the main salon several hundred stood awaiting evening meal. The *Queen Mary* made a hard turn, the deck tilted abruptly with the ship's roll and one-half of all those standing made an en masse prat-fall. The salon carpeting had ripped down the middle, the entire length of the deck. This was not to be the last time the operations staff was to have the rug pulled out from under them.

The first en route stop for the air crews was Presque Isle, Maine. We then left the United States in squadron flights of 12 aircraft beginning on September 25 and landed at Goose Bay, Labrador. At our first pilot's briefing at this sub-Arctic base, we were told that the North Atlantic route was closed for the winter. However, that only applied to passenger carrying aircraft and would not affect us. It was probably just as well that our gunners did not attend that briefing. From Goose Bay we flew on to Bluie West-One, Greenland (BW-1); Reykjavik, Iceland; Glasgow, Scotland, and into Horham Air Station, East Anglia, England. The 47th was the first to cross the North Atlantic in squadron formation under control of unit commanders. All others crossed singly under control of Ferry Command dispatchers. The last leg of this odyssey into North Africa was from Cornwall. We flew southwest to intersect 10 degrees west longitude, then due south at minimum altitude above the waves to avoid enemy detection from occupied France. A left turn carried us through the Straits of Gibraltar. Now we were flying about 2,000 feet above the sea. Here, we were fired on! Our first flak, of all things, came from Spanish batteries on the south shore. We were not at war with them so we climbed into cloud and the firing ceased, or at least we couldn't see it.

Reunion at Casablanca with others of the 47th was a great joy to all. In this near desert country there was mud everywhere, probably brought in especially for the war—all wars have mud. When we got pierced-steel-planking (PSP) down, we moved into a nearby abandoned French air station at Medouina. We then began to seek an entry into the real war in Tunisia still some 120 miles away. In early December we finally wrangled permission to send 12 aircraft into easternmost Algeria at Youks-les-Bains.



General Dwight Eisenhower visits the 47th at Youks, January 1943. (Courtesy of Tom Ratts)

Dick Horner's 86th Squadron got the honors and on December 13, 1942, 12 airplanes and crews left Medouina in early morning and arrived at Youks by late afternoon after making two refueling stops en route. Then Marion Aker's 97th Squadron got 13 airplanes and crews into Thelepte on December 28, 1942 after spending five nights and four days stuck in the mud at Oran Tafaroui (Taffy-Gooney) airport. Thelepte was a barren, buildingless, waterless piece of Tunisian desert some 60 or more miles southeast of Youks and roughly 35 miles from enemy lines. By mid-January 1943, Walt Hanna and his 84th airplanes and crews had moved into Youks with the 86 and Reg Clizbe and his 85th airplanes and crews had joined the 97th at Thelepte. We were told by Headquarters in Algiers that supplies were scarce in Tunisia and the United States Army was yet to be established there in strength. However, working with Headquarters in Algiers, we started our own trucks and maintenance vehicles forward across North Africa as the 84th and 85th airplanes and crews moved into Youks and Thelepte. When trucks finally became available to move everybody eastward, the aircraft were nearly all in place and the move was completed by late January 1943.

In southern Tunisia we bombed enemy airfields from altitude and attacked the German Panzers at low-level. Some targets were directed from XIIth Air Support Command at Tebessa, some from Headquarters in Algiers and some we found ourselves. Those pilots who got their aircraft filled with bombs, ammunition and fuel first, went on the next mission. Many flew individually back to Algiers in order to find a load of bombs. These were formative days; we had to start learning somehow. There was no front line. There was not that much army around. In support of a United States brigade-sized force in Ouseltia Valley, we bombed enemy artillery positions by stringing our bombs along just back of a ridge crest. *Algiers Headquarters told us*

later that this was the first successful counter-battery mission by United States aircraft in the war.

On most of our missions during these days German fighters met us. We also had fighter escorts provided by P-40s from the 33rd Composite Squadron, the 99th Fighter Squadron and Spitfires from the 51st Fighter Group. Often on our way home we used the A-20's great speed to outrun enemy fighters and let our own little brothers have the fight they were yearning for. The German fighters also knew where we lived. This gave our ground crews a chance to see some of the war. We were strafed on the ground at Thelepte two to three mornings a week. The German ME-109s would come out of the rising sun with guns blazing—a rather rude and noisy late “breakfast” call; then sometimes, they would return in early to mid-afternoon to provide more “entertainment” for our second and final meal of the day. Youks received fewer visits from this “entertainment” crew (perhaps the additional distance to Youks caused them fear of becoming lost) that far from home base; more likely though, they feared being intercepted by the P-40s at Thelepte on their way back when they would be too low on fuel to become engaged in a good dog fight without exhausting their fuel supply and being forced to bail out or crash land in the desert—neither of which was a desirable option. Nearly all of our supply was by C-47 transport aircraft at these forward bases. When the occasional flight of these “gooney birds” did land, they would kick the supplies out the door and take off. Since everything was in short supply we had mostly combat rations and British rations (bully beef, hard tack, marmalade and tea). There was lots of tea, but usually only enough for two meals (using the word loosely) per day. Coffee was scarce (good coffee non-existent) and usually made in a tin container over a fire of burning gasoline. The grounds were used over and over by adding more water, a few fresh

grounds and kept boiling (it would put hair on your chest). A few scrawny cattle were around, but we were asked not to kill the French Arab's livestock since they were supposed to be our friends and allies. This made the cooks pretty unhappy until one day an ME-109 killed a cow in our dispersal area, they said. "Well, we couldn't let this meat go to waste." After that the enemy fighter's aim improved remarkably and on nearly every raid they shot a beef or two.

Germany's Field Marshall Rommel and his forces had been forced to retreat from Egypt and Libya into southern Tunisia. He found it vital to hold off the pursuing British Forces as long as possible and at the same time widen his passageway to Tunisia and, if possible, knock the Allies out of the rest of Tunisia. To do this he would strike west and north through Kasserine Pass, through Thala and on north through the western part of Tunisia to the coast. German forces were marshaled behind Faid some 60 miles east of Thelepte. On February 14, 1943, Rommel's 10th Armored and 21st Division struck west and north toward Sbeitla and Kasserine. The Allies were caught by surprise but still put up stubborn resistance but eventually had to fall back and regroup.

The 97th and 85th Squadrons evacuated Thelepte on February 15 and 16 and moved back to Youks-les-Bains with the 84th and 86th. Because of very nasty weather, with rain and low clouds covering the mountains and most of the valleys, only one mission was flown from February 17 through February 21. The bad weather and the dogged resistance by the Allies slowed the German drive up the valley through the Kasserine Pass. During this period our service squadron and portions of the 86th and 97th Squadron moved to Canrobert, Algeria some 60 miles west of Tebessa.

On February 22, 1943, improved weather let us get back in the air with one of our biggest days of fighting and, also, the last time we were to use low-level attack. Beneath low clouds in the valleys northwest of Kasserine Pass and a few miles south of Thala, we pounded the Germans all day with a total of 13 missions (some aircraft flying four times over) three air crews were lost (our heaviest casualties in one day ever). That was on Washington's Birthday in 1943. The ground commander called to thank us for the pounding we gave the Germans and the boost it gave to his troops morale. The next morning the Germans were withdrawing from Kasserine Pass. The Group was awarded its first Distinguished Unit Citation (DUC) for these combat actions.

With few remaining flyable aircraft and all of our people, on March 6 we moved westward and joined the rest of the Group already at the well-stocked base at Canrobert, Algeria. Here in the true spirit of the Casablanca Conference for "Allied Cooperation," we added several members of the Royal Air Force (RAF) to our group; veterans all and really great guys. Until now our bombardiers were self-trained volunteers from within the group using home-made bomb sights. Now lead bombardiers joined each squadron from RAF flying officer ranks and brought along the Mark IX-E bombsights. Between widely spaced combat missions we put in a month of intensive medium altitude formation flying mul-

tiples of the basic box of six aircraft. We developed formation evasive action maneuvers for defended areas and minimum straight and level times over target for accuracy in bombing; this also provided good training for some new air crews we had received. We were now part of the Mediterranean Allied Tactical Bomber Force leaving the XIIth Air Support Command whom we had not seen much of anyway. Later we also acquired RAF lead gunnery control officers who showed us some new defensive tricks.

With this new look we were glad to return on the first week in April to our original desert home at Thelepte airfield. We now started hitting the German airfields in earnest. Enemy raids on us, at first intensive, gradually thinned out as we started getting the upperhand in the air. Our busiest day's work after we reoccupied Thelepte was seven attacks in strength on German airfields at La Fauconnerie, Tunisia on April 7, 1943. We were sent a personal citation by the Commander, Tactical Air Force for these effective raids. We were told that our efforts helped clear the skies of enemy aircraft over the Mareth Line as Allied Armies broke through. The Allies soon occupied all of southern Tunisia.

Shortly after the La Fauconnerie attacks we moved into northern Tunisia at Souk-el-Arba. Here we finished the Tunisian Campaign. One of the 47th's major strengths was a superior maintenance capability. Our senior NCOs had by this time trained some of the best field mechanics to be found anywhere. When asked if they could handle more aircraft they said they could. Consequently, the 47th was augmented to twice the number of air crews and aircraft. Our record sortie day was 143. On May 6, 1943, the start of the final coordinated Allied drive which captured Tunis, we flew 96 sorties before 0930 in the morning. One light bombardment group with the attack power of two groups. This is what superb air mechanics and support personnel can do for you in wartime when you need them. Allied victory was complete on May 12, 1943. Allied Headquarters in Algeria issued the following communiqué: "Organized resistance, except for isolated pockets of the enemy, has ceased. General Von Aroin, commander of the Axis forces in Tunisia has been captured. It is estimated that the total of prisoners captured since May 5 is about 150,000. Vast quantities of guns and war material of all kinds have been captured, including guns and aircraft in a serviceable condition." On May 20 we flew a formation in review over the Victory Parade in Tunis; it was a great feeling! During the next few days following the Axis surrender, we saw many prisoners of war (both German and Italian) being transported to rear areas by every sort of conveyance, even open freight cars. One train waiting on a siding especially attracted some of our Italian speaking airmen. And, lo and behold the next morning the train was gone, but we had a dozen or more happy Italian KP's, a few for each kitchen. Our troops had offered them the shortest way home. Probably, one of the few humane acts of the war. During this lull in active operations some of our experienced members left for the United States to become cadres for new units. Others were assigned new duties in the Tactical Bomber Force staff and command.

Our next campaign, a short one in June

1943, had its comic side. This was the reduction of the Italian islands of Pantellaria and Lampedusa in the Mediterranean between Tunisia and Sicily. These islands were pounded from the air, but casualties were light because the Italian garrisons stayed underground. They fired antiaircraft at us by remote control. An amphibious assault was mounted, but each garrison surrendered to the Air Force before Allied Amphibious Forces landed. Pantellaria surrendered through the display of panels on their airport which stopped Allied bombing as we had promised. Lampedusa surrendered to an RAF flight sergeant who had made a forced landing in an air-rescue amphibian bi-plane.

By the end of May 1943 we had moved into our new locations, airfields near the sandy beaches on Cape Bon Peninsula south and east of Tunis. This put us closer to our targets in Western Sicily in preparation for "Operation Husky" the invasion of Sicily on July 10, 1943. We bombed the airfields at Sciacca, troop movements, artillery placements and communication centers. On July 23 we moved to Ta Kali Airfield on the island of Malta as part of the growing Tactical Bomber Force including RAF and South African Air Force (SAAF) units. From Malta we provided support to the American landing forces that fought their way through stubborn enemy defenses up and down the coast at Gela and as they moved westward from Licata toward Palermo and eastward to link up with British and Canadian forces that landed on the southeastern tip of Sicily at Avola and Pachino. As Allied forces drove the enemy back, we moved from Malta to Comunelli, an airfield near Licata, on August 12, then three days later to Gerbini #10 (later to be Malaventano) on the Catania Plain. This put us much closer to our targets, the enemy desperately trying to flee across the Messina Straits into southern Italy. By August 16 the Sicilian campaign was over. The enemy had lost 167,000 of the 300,000 men they had on the island when the Allies landed. Allied losses were 25,000 of which 7,400 were American casualties.

After victory in Sicily things were quiet for a few days then the 47th took on a most unusual operation - fighter escort! Yes, with those A-20's equipped with multiple .50 caliber machine guns in the nose, we flew "top cover" for Allied shipping convoys in the central and western Mediterranean. *Another first for a light bombardment group.*

Next came preparation bombing for the Allied landings at Salerno on Sept. 8, 1943. We supported these operations and the following battles that established the Allies in Italy.

On July 25, 1943, Mussolini was forced to abdicate his position of Italian Premier and was replaced by Marshal Pietro Badoglio. After 40 days of Italian uprising demanding peace, Italy surrendered unconditionally on September 3, 1943. To hasten this process, after Mussolini's abdication, the Allies had intensified the bombing of military targets throughout all of Italy, including Rome for the second time. Also, on the morning of September 3, two British battleships steamed along the Italian coast north of the Messina Straits under the noses of Italian coastal guns pouring shells into the mainland. This was followed by great bodies of Allied

troops and innumerable landing craft, launched from the sandy Sicilian beaches north of Messina across the Straits onto the Italian mainland around Reggio Calabria and they were greeted warmly by the overjoyed Italian population, civilians and military personnel alike. Thus the invasion of Europe proper began.

At 6:30 p.m., September 8, 1943, General Eisenhower announced to the Italians, the Allied troops, and the world that as of that moment hostilities between the Allies and Italy were at an end. The first of the enemy nations had been knocked out of the war!

On September 19, 1943, an advance echelon of the 47th consisting of some 300 personnel plus necessary vehicles, essential equipment, etc., left Malaventano in convoy for Grottaglie Airfield near Taranto, Italy. The airfield had been an Italian Air Force Base prior to their surrender and had a hard-top ramp and two hangars, plus barracks, mess hall and other usable buildings, all in stark contrast to the airfields from which we had been operating. Airplanes, crews and the balance of the Group were in place within a week only to find that the war was out of our reach as the new German line of defense in eastern Italy had moved considerably north. By October 15, we were in place at our new hastily graded airfield, Vincenzo, on the western edge of the Foggia Plain. Most missions from here were in support of ground forces in central Italy and the British forces along the eastern coast. Several of these missions were targets such as gun emplacements, fortified positions or the back slope of high ground within a few hundred yards of our own troops. There was, however, another war to the east. We performed night drops to native guerrilla forces in occupied Yugoslavia. We did daylight bombing also on pinpoint targets for which we received radioed thanks from the friendly guerrillas over there, sometimes before our aircraft had returned to base.

In early January 1944, we moved across the peninsula to the eastern foot of Mount Vesuvius near Naples. From here we engaged in intensive operations against road and rail bridges, enemy airfields and enemy heavily fortified positions and enemy ground forces who were stubbornly resisting the Allied attempt to break through the Gustav Line. Many of our missions were against Monte Cassino where the high ground held by the Germans gave them the commanding control over the approaches to the Liri Valley and the routes north to Rome and the industrial heartland of northern Italy.

Sometimes we were given an unusual mission, such as helping rescue a sizable element of French forces that had succeeded in crossing the flooded Rapido River under heavy enemy fire. They then moved forward against light resistance until the trap was sprung and they found themselves surrounded by the enemy. With heavy fragmentation bombs capable of knocking out light arms, and small antipersonnel bombs, together with low level strafing, we blasted a gap in the enemy's positions at the rear of the encircled French troops allowing them to escape. The French considered this action so commendable, crew members were awarded the French Croix de Guerre, the French medal for bravery.

The 47th was over the beaches at Anzio in the early morning hours bombing enemy posi-

tions in front of our troops coming ashore from the invasion fleet. Our close support of this new front as well as the front near Cassino continued until the collapse of enemy resistance, the breakthrough of the Gustav forces culminated on Trinity Sunday June 4, 1944, with the Allies standing at the gates of Rome, the Eternal City and seat of Christian civilization. In reverence to the sacred day, they waited until Monday to enter.

When we moved to Vesuvius in early January, were assured by the Italian volcano experts that we had nothing to fear regarding the possibility of a Mount Vesuvius eruption (the clouds of steam from time to time and the intermittent rumblings were quite normal for it during its "quiet time," periods of no danger of eruption. However, this "quiet time" proved to be short-lived. In late afternoon of March 21, 1944, Mount Vesuvius "blew its top" with a thunderous roar. Since no airfields had lighting for night operations and with only two and one-half hours of daylight remaining, we immediately evacuated to Capodochino located north of Naples. We operated from here, along with a former coastal patrol squadron re-equipped with P-47s for ground support operations. Since Capodochino was a small airfield, many of our airplanes stood wing tip to wing tip along the sides of the field thus making a very lucrative target for German attack. They tried, but only at night and with very few aircraft since there was very little left of their bomber force which became smaller with each raid they attempted, thanks to the accuracy of the Allied air defense gunners protecting the Naples harbor and our airfield.

By April 25, Mount Vesuvius had settled down and was relatively quiet so we moved back to our airfield which had suffered no damage except for a little volcanic ash remaining on the southern portions. Millions of words have been written and millions of photos taken during this awesome display of unharnessed energy by Mother Nature, but those members of the 47th who were privileged to witness it will always carry in their minds their own indelible picture of an angry and fiery mountain at night.

On June 19, 1944, the 47th moved to Ponte Galeria, a quickly graded airfield on the northern bank of the Tiber River a few miles southwest of Rome. Following the liberation of Rome, the allied line began to accelerate its movement north through Italy with gains in several sectors ranging from five to six miles a day. Our supporting missions were against enemy supply dumps and communication centers.

To keep within range to support the Allied advance we moved, on June 24 to another hastily prepared airfield on the plains west of Grosseto near the sea. Here at Ombrone, the 86th and 97th Squadrons began preparation to start night intruder/interdiction missions. The enemy had found that moving at night provided safety from Allied air attacks since none of the Allied airfields were equipped with lighting facilities. Another pioneering role for the 47th; there were no "Books of Instruction" no "How to Do It" manuals, these would be developed.

On July 15 it was on to Rosetta, Corsica to shorten the range to targets in support of planned landings in Southern France (Code name "Avon") a part of Operation Overlord, the final Allied ground assault in Europe. Prior to the land-



Eruption of Vesuvius, as seen from heights above Naples and across the harbor, March 1944. (Courtesy of Marion J. Akers)

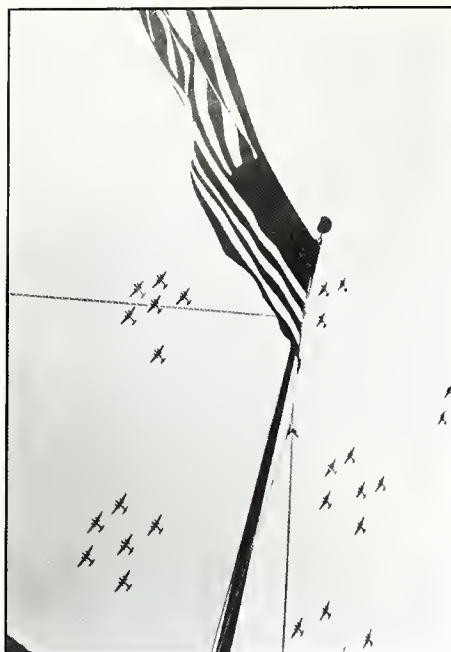


At night - molten lava running down the principal street of San Sebastiano, which was ultimately destroyed by the eruption. (Courtesy of Marion Akers)



Lava destroying village near Vesuvius. (Courtesy of Marion Akers)

ings on August 14, we continued to operate against targets in Italy as well as targets in southern France. Soon after moving to Salon, France on September 4 and 5, we found ourselves involved in ferrying critical supplies (i.e., gasoline, communication and rations) to the front which was moving forward so rapidly that supplies could not keep up with them. After the Al-



Planes of the 47th in flight after the war, April 1946.
(Courtesy of R. A. Kiefer)

ODE TO THE 47TH BOMB GROUP

by Ernie Johnson

Where have they gone,
these 30 odd years?
Laden with life and love;
aye, even tears;
All passed so swiftly now,
even the joys, Since that first time
we stood,
no longer boys;
But flexing muscles of
courage and skill;
Finding that first taste of
fate to fulfill.

This is Reunion Day,
that we all feel;
Crowned with our duties done,
honors are real.
Yet as we lift this cup,
sweet though it be,
Let none forget we have
guests none can see.
Comrades we left behind,
some down in flame.
Theirs was the greatest gift,
theirs the true fame.

lied forces from the south linked up with those from the Normandy landings we moved back to help finish the job in Italy.

After battling the heavy rains and deep mud on dirt airfields at Fallonica and Rossignola, the group moved into the airfield at Grosseto which had a PSP runway and taxi-ways and reasonably well drained dispersal areas. It also had a P-47 group on it which made things a bit crowded. The cold, wet, miserable weather

coupled with the rugged mountainous terrain slowed the progress of the ground war in the winter months. The enemy was dug in along the Gothic Line that ran from coast to coast of Italy and through the rugged mountains on the southern edge of the Po Valley. To ease congestion at Grosseto and to put them closer to the front lines, the 97th Squadron, in March 1945, moved to the airfield at Pisa which had a fine concrete runway, taxi-ways and ramps, plus hangars (not too badly damaged) and better living conditions.

By now, the Group had received several new, much improved airplanes, the Douglas A-26C. Compared to the A-20s they were larger, faster, more powerful and carried larger and more versatile bomb loads. In addition, there was more fire power (two twin 50 cal. turrets), together with improved range and weather capability, the Norden bombsight, and provided a more stable bombing and gunnery platform, but still a dream to fly.

Atop one of the highest mountains in the vicinity of Florence, the Allies had a powerful radar station covering most of the Po Valley, this was a great assist to us since we had no radar in our aircraft. The Po Valley radar could pinpoint stationary and moving targets and then would vector us to them—it no longer did “Jerry” any good to turn out his lights when he heard us approaching, as radar took us right to him—radar was also helpful when occasionally the message was “Make a steep turn to the right—Boggies on your tail.” That always got your attention! Through the efforts of a few of our bombsight technicians and Po Radar, a technique was developed and used very successfully, whereby a Norden bombsight was mounted on top of a Link trainer “bug” which in turn was tied in with the radar plotting board on the ground to track the airplane toward a given target. Necessary data such as bomb type, altitude, airspeed, etc., was put into the bomb sight; then, as the aircraft was tracked along a precise line toward the target, the aircraft was given a signal at the precise time to drop the bombs to hit the target. The accuracy was amazing and was very useful in bad weather.

By late April 1945, the enemy’s lines were crumbling and they were attempting to get large numbers of their troops out of Italy into central Europe. The 47th went on continuous operations, day and night for three days. It was a continuous air assault in all kinds of weather, in mountainous terrain and the Po Valley flat land. The Group prevented evacuation of large portions of the German ground forces out of Italy. For these actions the 47th was awarded its second Distinguished Unit Citation.

When victory in Europe was complete, V-E Day, the Group returned to the United States and after leave, personnel re-assembled at Seymour Johnson Air Base, Goldsboro, North Carolina. Air crews flew our A-26s home across the South Atlantic route.

The unit was now to prepare for re-deployment to the Pacific for night pathfinder operations against Japan. However, the early surrender by Japan in August 1945, V-J Day, scrubbed all redeployment plans and the Group moved into home base at Lake Charles, Louisiana for about a year. There the Group was full equipped with the A-26. At this time many old timers

found their way back into the 47th again. In 1966 the Group was reduced from four to three tactical squadrons and the 97th Bombardment Squadron was deactivated.

Here ends this story of the 47th. Others could have much to add to the history of this outstanding fighting organization in World War II. First to cross the Atlantic in Squadron formation, first American Light Bombardment Group to enter the war against German Forces, over two and one-half years of combat operations, veterans of 10 campaigns, winning nine Battle Stars and two Presidential Unit Citations. We can all be very proud.

Addenda

Campaigns: American Theater, Algeria-French Morocco, Tunisia, Sicily, Naples-Foggia, Anzio, Rome-Arno, Southern France, North Apennines, Po Valley.

Decorations: Distinguished Unit Citations: North Africa, 22 February 1943; Po Valley, 21-24 April 1945.

Insignia: Shield or, in chief, a bomb sable, point downward, winged gules, surmounting an arc, reversed and couped, azure, all above a stylized cloud indication, of the second, emitting four lightning flashes gules toward base. (Approved 26 October 1951).

47TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP: FROM GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA TO NORTH AFRICA

Advance Echelon

With the War Department’s conniving assistance, the 58 officers and 193 enlisted men of the Advance Echelon pulled a financial coup 5 September 1942 and found themselves elevated into the overseas-pay brackets when they groped through the 3 a.m. darkness of the New York piers and boarded the HMS *Queen Mary*, the massive liner whose more than 40 knot pace has undoubtedly made more than one U-boat’s periscope twirl like a dime-store top.

Under command of Lieutenant Colonel Malcolm Green Jr., the echelon left by train from Greensboro-Highpoint Airport, Greensboro, North Carolina about noon, 27 August for the Overseas Staging Area at Fort Dix, New Jersey. They were fresh from the Carolina maneuvers, the last full-dress rehearsal for what was ahead. Representing the key men of headquarters and the four combat squadrons, the 84th, 85th, 86th and 97th, the echelon arrived at Fort Dix at 6 in the morning of 28 August and plunged without delay into the business of getting outfitted, photographed, fingerprinted, together with the unavoidable calisthenics, the double-time jogs with full pack.

In a sense, Fort Dix at the time, and inevitably when groups assembled for overseas, was a place of reunion. Officers and men saw others whose lives had followed different military paths, but all led to the Staging area where for a while their courses were to run parallel to the fighting front. Many a friendly cup was downed to the life ahead, while the men waited word to leave.

The entire group was on the alert. No passes, strict checkout system to visit the barbership, PX

or the movies, and frequently the yell would go out in the theatre: "1702 YY report to barracks immediately!"

Time came, at 2200 on 4 September, when the 47th pulled out. By night to the railhead and the blacked-out train ride to Jersey City. "Listen Joe, we're good friends and all that, and we've been together a long time, but if you don't keep your rifle from butting me in the head, and take your barracks hag off my lap, I'm goin' to knock your head off." From the back of a car came the mournful, dissonant wail, "Joisey was never like this."

Out of the train, down the steps, along the passageways, into the ferry, where the men of the 47th were treated to New York at night, the dimmed-out skyline and the fresh, moist breeze whipping across the bay.

Boarding was carried out in virtual darkness; only occasional lights studded the darkness of the pier, where some 16,000 troops filed along in dusky shadow, waiting their turn to ascend the gang-plank. The wait wasn't long, and like burdened ants, the GIs disappeared into the looming flat side of the transport. Most of the men suspected (devious are the ways of the grapevine) that they were shipping on the *Queen Mary*, and the tersest comment emerged as "Big son of a bitch, ain't she?" Enlisted men were berthed in the Tourist Lecture Salon on B deck aft. A flooring had been put in at half the height of the salon, and bunks were erected four high above, and four more below the flooring. Barracks bags, rifles and the rest of the impedimenta of war were slung and stored in every conceivable crevice; the kapok life belts were donned and the echelon (about to get a short course in seamanship) pronounced itself ready to sail. The skipper and crew, who had most to say about embarking, perversely (it seemed) decided to wait a while so the bunks filled up with the still land based sailors.

Come noon, the subdued mutterings of the ship's great engines tumbled the echelon out of the bunks. The grapevine had since confirmed that their floating city was the *Queen Mary*, queen of the seas, and their first look from topside revealed the ship was even larger than it appeared at night.

Weather was comfortably warm with a slight haze hanging over the stalagmite beehive of Manhattan, as tugs eased the giant from the slip and headed it out into the bay.

When it developed that the *Queen* (its 1,018 foot length making it the second largest ship in the world) was to dash the North Atlantic route alone, unencumbered by any less swift convoy vessels, more than one wag took a passionate look at the fading Statue of Liberty, hooked one leg over the rail and yelled, "Yep, I think I can make it. A cutter will pick me up."

Aboard, both officers and men busied themselves the first few days exploring the ship. Stairways were endless, decks were Tropical Park boarded over, and the rumor that several bearded, almost sightless welders had been found in the hold, workmen long lost in the yawning bowels of the ship, was tracked down and found to be without any foundation whatsoever.

Two meals a day were served in the huge mess halls, but appraisals as to quality of the food ranged from "Tol'able" to "Intol'able." Long

tables had been erected in the mess halls, with wash water at each end. During the last several days of the voyage, when the seas got heavy and stomachs light, downing chow became a physical feat in two senses.

A well-stocked PX carried various lines of cokes, candy bars and cigarettes which were sold, generally by organizations, in case lots. More than one barracks hag shouldered off at Gourock, Scotland, bulged with "emergency stores."

For the entire route, beyond a plane which circled them for two hours out of New York, and corvettes which skittered around in sniffing turns, no other ship or escort was seen. Eternally zig-zagging in a weird, never-to-be computed pattern, the *Queen Mary* hucked through the waves, frothy by day, florescent at night. Chill crept into the air and the story passed from lip to lip that the ship was within 150 miles of Iceland; for the truth of it, consult the *Queen's* log well after the peace makes it a militarily useless bit of information.

Several mornings, target practice converted the *Queen* into an out-streaming pin cushion as AA guns poured strings of tracers into mythical attacking planes, and the rear gun gave out its dull cough, the shot spraying up in the ocean thousands of yards away. In relief of the commonplace, the gun workout was thoroughly enjoyed, but the uneasy thought flickered through a thousand minds: "Some difference if there were something out there."

Fog hung over nestling Gourock like a first mortgage, when the *Queen* dropped anchor at 0600 on 11 September, less than a week after the echelon had left New York. The *Queen* had inched up the Clyde, but no depth or dock in the harbor was sufficient for her draught or hulk, so the men spent the rest of the day on shipboard, disembarking on lighters about 1630 in the evening. The weather had cleared during the day, and the GIs had ample opportunity to study the lazily floating barrage balloons over the harbor, the anchored grey men-of-war, the myriad merchant vessels and lethal 900 ton corvettes.

Day before, the men had been issued six cans of C rations, enough for two days, ammunition and, together with all other equipment, rode over to land on the lighters, touching Scottish soil at Gourock.

As darkness fell, the spiny silver searchlights took exhaustive "readings" on several vagrant clouds, and a blaring PA system sent greetings to the American soldiers from their British Allies, and wound up with a promise of tea and cakes on the train. Boarding Class A coaches of the London North Eastern Railroad, the echelon settled down to a continuation of the six-day card games. Tables had been placed between the seats, shades were down (the coaches were blacked out) and tiny slit lights gave out just enough glow to see the hole cards. Some of the men had compartments and dozed while the train clicked on, leaving Scotland behind and in early morn rolled through the English countryside.

Small picturesque farms dotted the rolling hills, growing gradually larger as the train approached more thickly populated villages. It was for all the world like picture book scenes, the windmills, Clydesdale horses pulling brilliantly painted two wheeled carts. "Miniature" freight cars with spoke-wheels, the network of canals

and dikes, nonchalant fishermen wearing dories, bridges for pedestrians over the train tracks, and, showing the ingenuity bred of necessity, teams of massive horses serving as switch-engines.

All along the route, English civilians waved, though uniformed figures far outnumbered those in civvies.

About 1400 on 12 September, the train arrived at Bury St. Edmonds and as the echelon detrained, they were asked by curious civilians, "Are you soldiers or airmen?" The question apparently was based upon the fact that the British army and the Royal Air Force are separate.

English lorries were on hand, and took the men to Rougham Airdrome (four or five miles away). It was a breathtaking trip for some who braced themselves for a collision every time a car approached from the opposite direction. "I don't see how this jerk gets away with it, but he's doin' all right for drivin' on the wrong side of the road all the time." It was reportedly months before left-handed traffic was viewed with other than apprehension.

The convoy threaded its way through the narrow, crooked streets of Bury St. Edmonds, the American unit viewing with interest the quaint store fronts, the ivied aging houses, the cobbled pavements. The way was lined with venerable trees, the fields studded with haystacks, while precisely trimmed hedges and shrubs served as fences.

It was at 1700 that the troops drove in to Rougham Airdrome, and the first echelon of the 47th had reached its overseas station.

Second Ground Echelon

By the time the 15 officers and 342 enlisted men of the Second Ground Echelon had marched two and a half miles through the murky mist to the Fort Dix railhead, all this at 0500 on 1 November 1942, they were convinced it was no dry run. They were off to overseas, presumably to join the rest of the 47th Group in England.

Under the command of Captain B.C. Cochran, the Echelon had left Greensboro-Highpoint Airport, Greensboro, North Carolina (Friendship station) on 17 October 1942 at 1800 and had arrived at the Fort Dix overseas staging area at 1245, 18 October. Until 1 November they had been doing double time with full packs, getting "pin-cushion arm" from numerous shots, artfully transferring cosmoline from their new firearms to their coveralls, and generally "sweating out" the big jump.

The morning of 1 November must have resembled a railroad man's dream, as train after train shuttled back and forth between Fort Dix and the NYPE. At 0800 the 47th Echelon filed into their cars on the Jersey City Limited, laden down like Christmas Eve shoppers.

It was like boarding the IRT at five in the afternoon, carrying a bull fiddle under one arm, and a bird cage in the other. After a last look at the Jersey swamps, the troops detrained at Jersey City and boarded a ferry at 1055.

Out in New York Harbor...seagulls plopping into the waves and taking off with morsels of food...the jagged gray skyline etched against a leaden sky...the Statue of Liberty (wait for us, will ya baby?)...and gaunt men-of-war riding at anchor.



L to R: Lt. George Baggs, Bombardier/Navigator; Sgt. Bill Krause, Gunner; Lt. Bill Young, Pilot; Sgt. Marshall White, Gunner. North Africa, June 1943. (Courtesy of George Baggs)

The ferry nudged into the piled slip at Staten Island at noon and the officers and men filed off (What! No Arah's to haul this barracks bag?) and almost immediately they boarded the USAT *Santa Rosa*, a Grace Line luxury liner of about 12,000 tons.

Each man, at the foot of the gangplank, gave his name and was given a card showing his deck and bunk number. Entire Echelon was quartered in Prom forward, four hunks high and microscopes handy to spot the passageways. They were all quartered within easy smelling distance of the dining hall. The officers occupied state-rooms on B deck.

The *Santa Rosa* sailed at 0215 on 2 November 1942 and by 0348 had passed the three-mile limit. As the ship rode over the gentle swells, the 47th expressed collective but private apprehensions as to their seamanship.

With dawn, the men found their ship a part of a large convoy of some 30 ships, accompanied by the USS *Arkansas*, several cruisers and, far out on the flanks, scurrying destroyers. Overhead cruised two blimps and a PBV, alert for any menace from submarines.

For several days, the men were engrossed with the sight of the convoy and the ocean, and indulged in speculation as to just where the end of the chow line was. (For several days, before the mess schedule began to function smoothly, the chow line wound once around Prom, then down around A, B and so on until it disappeared into the old, where, one startled GI insisted, he had found Davy Jones trying to buck the line).

Everyone wore life preservers; some days later, a sickly green pallor was part of regulation equipment.

Out five days, some looking on the port how for Southampton, the buzzing rumor went around the ship that the troops were destined to land in North Africa, and were to be a part of the establishment of the Second Front. The rumor was confirmed, and the next day, 7 November, hook-lets were distributed advising the GIs how to act in the presence of Moslem women and how to deal tactfully with Arah's bearing knives.

From then on, men strained their memories for the half-forgotten rudiments of French, and privately rehearsed their conversations with the natives. (Little did they know with what a limited vocabulary they could operate!)

Money was changed for the yellow-seal currency, the GIs poured over maps of Africa in the officers' cabins, and all talk turned to the forthcoming campaign. A daily news bulletin mimeographed sheets of official news picked up by radio, was passed around from group to group and on 8 November the shape of the strategy, in skeleton form, began to unfold.

All this time the convoy had been zig-zagging, and GI speculations as to where they were was finally narrowed to: the Bering Sea, just off Dakar, the mouth of the Mississippi, Lake Superior, and off the Azores. Merchant Marine officers believed the last was approximately right. On 14 November another convoy joined them.

As the voyage passed the mid-point, preparations were made for landing the hard way.

Helmets, leggings, firearms, full packs, ammunition, even the American flag brassards. Men and officers donned them and filed down into C deck forward and by pairs clambered down landing nets rigged up in a cargo hatch descending to D deck.

Three times they went through this routine and the most spirited discussions revolved around who was going ashore in which boat. Meanwhile, the show went down, and sometimes up; poker in its most virulent forms made up the nightly program, and the ship's PX dwindled by the careful.

News of the African campaign was devoured eagerly: "We've taken Oran...the Jean Bart's disabled...Rommel's making a magnificent advance to the westward, while Montgomery knocks the hell out of his rear guard."

Land never looked quite so attractive, when, on 18 November, the long stretches of Africa loomed ahead at 0900. By 1100 the convoy had reached the outer harbor, and excited GIs studied the cream-colored gem that is Casablanca.

Overhead, flights of P-40s scoured the sky, while PBVs flew back and forth on an unceasing sub guard. Grim destroyers scurried around the ships like sea-going terriers, ash cans ready.

In a long, slow moving line the ships filed into the inner harbor where sunken and some still-smoking hulks testified as to the heat of the battle and accuracy of our naval gunners.

The troops spent their last night on board as the *Santa Rosa* was moored to the side of a freighter, and at 0930 the next morning, 19 November, they disembarked.

All four squadrons and Headquarters carried their personal equipment (including the same aforementioned barracks bags) to a field near the warehouses, where they dug into their first K ration.

In the afternoon, they were met by Major E.B. Fletcher and other officers who had flown down from England in C-47s and arrangements were made to transport the men to Medouina Air Base, about 18 miles southwest of Casablanca, where the 47th was to be stationed.

At one time in the afternoon prospects seemed alarmingly bright for a brisk 18 mile walk by the light of the moon, although the moon-deal fell through and it started to rain like hell. In a driving rain, the 47th Echelon marched to an old French wool warehouse then taken over for storing army and navy supplies, and with the help of the French about 18 buses were rounded up and the trip to Medouina was started.

The route went through the Casablanca business section, and the GIs took a wide-eyed look at the bizarre, cosmopolitan city.

On the ride out, Master Sergeant Leo A. Poutre, Headquarters rattled on in French to his bus driver and then in English gave the other men a running account of the Casablanca battle, which went into extra innings as the D-5 convoy covered the South Atlantic in concentric circles.

Camel caravans (not to be confused with the GI favorite at home) and choking charcoal and oil burning autos were seen on the ride to Medouina, which some of the soldiers made ATOP the bus.

The Echelon arrived at Medouina at 1930, and found General Mud in complete control.

Rear Echelon

The Rear Echelon of the 47th Group won a distinction on its voyage to Africa, when the troop commanding officer on the USAT *Monterey* complimented the some 4,000 troops aboard as being the most military and efficient group ever transported on that ship. They broke all records for boat drills, and policed up in a manner which amazed the veteran troop company.

Including eight officers and 319 enlisted men, the Rear Echelon was under the command of 1st Lieutenant Erskine D. Hiott, 85th Squadron.

The day after the Second Ground Echelon left Greensboro, North Carolina, on 17 October 1942, the Rear Echelon had moved to Morris Field, Charlotte, North Carolina, staying there until 21 November when they proceeded to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, for overseas staging.

The staging process and usual garrison duties occupied the Echelon until mid-January, and it was during this period that the men of the Echelon established their parting contacts with civilization, a saga which they recited with little urging to the forward echelons bivouacked in wind-swept Algerian valleys.

"Yeah, we got caught in the New Year's Eve throng in Times Square...this blond and I...cute little chick...dropped in at the New Yorker for a scotch or two...what an apartment she had!"

The oldsters, who had played host at Thelepte and Youks-les-Bains to the mice and frogs on the ground and ME-109s and JU-88s in the air, stared silently and thoughtfully for a moment and then fell upon the "recruits" and beat the hell out of them.

It was 13 January 1943 when the Echelon filed into trains at Camp Kilmer and went to Jersey City, thence by ferry to the New York Piers where they boarded at 0100 on 14 January 1943 the USAT *Monterey*, a converted Matson liner of some 14,000 tons. The ship sailed early the same morning and was part of an "average size" heavily-guarded convoy.

Men of the 85th Squadron were quartered in the pavilion of a deck, with the other squadrons sleeping in the Promenade, writing rooms and on C deck. Captain Herbert N. Boden learned that he was quartered in the same stateroom Bette Davis occupied on a voyage to Australia. It is reported, without confirmation, that Captain Boden gave the room a more than cursory search (hope springs eternal...) shortly after he was informed of the fact.

The crossing was mild. Weather was distinctly balmy in the Gulf Stream, and the men performed calisthenics stripped to the waist, and lounged on the decks in shirtsleeves.

Most of the waking day was spent in trying to adopt a psychological different approach to the ship's chow ("Maybe I just think it's lousy!") and teaching the neophytes the inner workings and hidden mechanisms of the Great Game of Poker. No incidents marred the voyage.

Land was sighted in the morning of 25 January, and it took the rest of the day to ease the convoy into Casablanca harbor. By 1800 the transports were docked and at 1930 the officers and men of the 47th disembarked.

To add to the excitement in this new world



The 47th over Lampedusa, June 1943. (Courtesy of George Baggs)



Lt. Dale Kaegge, Pilot, 84th Squadron, December 1943. (Courtesy of George Baggs)

of fuming autos (charcoal burning), odd store signs and strangely-attired natives, a red alert went up. Nothing occurred, however.

They marched three miles to Bivouac Area No. 1 for Army Air Force troops where the men slept among blades of whispering grass sans shelter halves, while the man in the moon looked sarcastically down on them.

During the two months the 47th men were in Casablanca, they furnished details for unloading docks, hauling stores at the ration dump and moving oil and gas drums. A firing range was rigged up among the dunes, and the as-yet-unfired rifles and tommy guns got their first workout.

Similarly, after the first day, the inventive genius of the American soldier went into action, and the bivouac area was studded with "apartments" made of tank crates picked up on the docks and topped with shelter halves.

A generator was put to use, and soon the troops had electric lights and juice for their radios. Transportation proved to be a problem, but not an insuperable one. The troops were three miles from town, and it was a long hike for showers and entertainment, so whenever their lone command car took off for Casablanca, it was really loaded ("I'm tellin' ya...get the hell off...we've got 11 in this thing already"), a short time later, several jeeps were "acquired" and the transportation problem was no more.

It was a period of "waiting" (if heaving boxes from morning 'til night can be called that) and the boys were impatient to get news from the front. It was not until Captain Marion J. Akers, commanding 97th Squadron, came through Casablanca on a mission and gave them the dope in an informal get-together that they gathered their first accurate picture of what the rest of the Group was accomplishing.

Captain Akers described the Algerian way of life (foxholes et al) and held the attention of every man as he gave an account of the combat missions.

In a pelting rain on 24 March they piled into box cars on the "Tri-Weekly Railroad" (it goes up once a week and tries to get back the next) and started on the last leg of their journey to Canrobert Aerodrome, where the remainder of the outfit was stationed.

Thirty-two men to a box car, they occupied 15 of them, with the officers in a coach. Rabat...Oujda...Taza...Sidi bel Abbes. On through the bleak, but ruggedly picturesque countryside. On up into the mountains, some of them snow-capped.

"It's a rugged deal, men" they would sigh as they watched Morocco become Algerian and Tunisia come nearer and nearer. Webster says a wheel is "a circular frame...turning upon its own axis," but those in the rear echelon mourn that the valiant railroad had strayed far from the "circular" idea.

It was 0230 on 29 March that the train pulled into Telergma and the 47th cars were put on a siding under the winking stars, and the troops slept soundly. While they slept, the stars winked out, and the rain which they left at Casablanca must have taken a navigator aboard and worked out a successful interception problem, for the trains were now unloaded in rain.

Into trucks at 1000 for the last leg of the

trip, and at 1430 the rear echelon pulled into Canrobert Airdrome. The entire 47th Group was together again, seven months from the time the First Echelon had departed the Greensboro woods for the fighting front.

England

On the morning of 13 September 1942, the officers and men of the 47th's advance echelon woke up in a world of shillings, NAAFI's, pubs and airdromes. For the next two months they were to be introduced to their British allies, and to await the opening of the second front (though they did not know it at the time).

Quickly learned was the lingo which converted radio tubes into "valves;" dollars into shillings, florins and crowns; buses into trams; the runway into the "carpet" and "What's the gen?" (abbreviation for general knowledge) became the question of the day, instead of "What's the latest rumor?"

Still a building was the Rougham Airdrome, the 47th's first overseas station. It was an RAF base set among gently sloping hills, and near at hand to the quaint towns so typically English. A skeleton staff was provided by the British to operate the base, consisting of the CO, the engineering officer, the catering (mess) officer and others, and enlisted men.

The newly arrived Americans were quartered in Nissen huts, concrete-floored billets with rounded corrugated steel roofs which housed 10 or 12 enlisted men, or, for the officers, housed four on one side and had two separate rooms on the other. There was the NAAFI, the PX's British counterpart operated by the Navy, Army, Air Force Institute where similar purchases could be made. Rationing was in effect, however, and an average week's trade might consist of a can of peanuts, three or four candy bars, six packs of cigarettes and several packages of gum. Some traded their candy for cigarettes, but all found no ice cream for any price; there just wasn't any. Lighter fluid and flints were sold, while on the refreshment side there were the inevitable tea and cakes, biscuits and coffee, and beer.

Just as on shipboard, the advent of new rations evoked premature enthusiasm among the men and they ate the first few kidney stews with relish. Chow from then on fell into a monotonous gastronomical pattern and the GI's could anticipate porridge for breakfast, potatoes and cabbage for lunch and mutton for the evening meal at seven. English tea time at 1600 worked in a fourth meal; an abrupt change from the two on the *Queen Mary*.

Until 25 September there were no air operations, but on that day eight planes of the 85th Bomb Squadron arrived, led by Captain R.J. Clizbe, CO, pilots were Captain Guynon Penix, Lieutenant Delmar W. Atchison, Lieutenant Cecil F. Daniel, Lieutenant Harry J. Farabee, Lieutenant James D. Gilmore, Lieutenant Robert E. Gray, Lieutenant Averette A. Hinson and Lieutenant Spencer H. Gulick.

There were a few Tiger-Moths, RAF training planes, at Bury St. Edmonds, several miles away, and these along with the A-20s provided planes for training. England, then and now, was a veritable checkerboard of airdromes; seemingly every adaptable landing ground had been built

up into an airdrome. Their similarity, from the air, imposed new navigation problems and more than once, pilots gave several fields close scrutiny before selecting Rougham by process of elimination.

There was another hazard to getting lost, the barrage balloons which might be encountered in heavy weather. The shrill screeching the taut cables gave off is, according to pilots who came close to them, is "like nothing else in this world."

Bicycles had come into their own in the transportation world. A good one ran about 10 pounds (\$40) and soon the barracks looked like a Western Union Office on a dull day. Perhaps the exploits of their youth on bicycles (Hey Skinny! ...looka me stand on the seat!) inspired a certain recklessness among the 47th's officers and men, that and the years that had intervened, because this mode of transportation took a small toll of casualties. One night Lieutenant Frederick J. Brown and Lieutenant Edward C. Czeslowski, chaplain, were wheeling home from a sketchy examination of the local pub situation. It would be an understatement to say the night was dark, and ahead of them the road wound like a nebulous ribbon; now you see it, now you don't. They got their signals mixed on which turn to take, and wound up in a tangle of bicycles.

In the matter of passes, the officers got the rough end of the deal. After three weeks overseas, the enlisted men could obtain passes, but there was a three months' wait for the officers, unless they wanted to take time out of their regular leave, which most of them did, to visit London.

Norwich, Bury, Ipswich, Eye, Rougham. The furthest of them was 25 miles away, and the men with passes visited them several times weekly. Their interest in the pubs (public houses) was more than sociological, but it was in these quaint meeting places that they got to know the English people. Names that pubs had held for centuries were on the signs swinging from their eaves: The Cock, The Fox and Hound, The Hen and Chickens, The Polecat, The Wolf, The Black (Red and White) Lions, and The Grapes. These institutions were generally private homes, several rooms of which were converted for the sale of ales, lights, darks and Bitters. The bar would be in one room, while several others were arranged with card and checker tables, dart games and a piano about which the citizenry would assemble to sing the lusty pub songs.

The English were congenial but reserved, and men of the 47th pride themselves on finally putting to rest the cowboy-gangster legend which has haunted Americans abroad for years. At that time, "Deep in the Heart of Texas" was at the height of its popularity and added an additional burden of belief to dispel. Many the time after the GIs would howl out the words, a quizzical, walrus-mustached Old Bill would sidle up and ask, "Are you a cowboy?"

Liquor was rationed so the most popular drink was a good bottle of stout, which came to seven pence (14 cents). Most of the natives drank warm beer in mugs.

No one will ever know how much of Lend-Lease has already been repaid over pub gaming tables. The English play a game of "Pontoon" very much like Blackjack, except that they bet on the first card, a little more on the second and

again on the hit, and then say "I'll stick." The men of the 47th not only forced them every time to play Blackjack, but also introduced them to the intricacies of craps, though it is doubtful that the Britains are playing game in its purest form, because there is more than a suspicion that the GIs introduced new precepts, changing the rules to fit the occasion.

Whatever skill girls on the Isle have in the art of jitterbugging, they may credit to the Americans, who found them ready and willing, but hardly past the basic stage.

At Rougham, there were no Nazi raids, although members of the Echelon saw the flares, heard the sirens, and watched the streams of AA fire go up to meet Merry, several times bringing them down.

Staff Sergeant Sidney Goldberg, Headquarters pretended to some acuteness as to his power to distinguish between Allied planes, and the Jerries. His fame teetered like a nuke before Hitler, after, on three successive occasions, he propped himself up on his downy couch, cocked an ear, and reported: "Crrump, crrump, crrump" of bombs on Norwich. Sergeant Goldberg's reputation was short-lived.

Among the minor milestones at Rougham were: 16 September, raid at Ipswich, viewed from a comfortable distance; 20 September, one pork chop for dinner (Waht, no mutton?); 21 September, mail started coming in from the States; 1 October, a group of men went to London.

To see London in peace time is a unique experience; the raid-wracked city still gay under the shadow of war is doubly interesting. The changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace, the Strand, Scotland Yard, Picadilly Circus, the melancholy Thames, the historic Houses of Parliament, the vaulted arches of Westminster Abbey which have witnessed mutely the coronation of countless kings and queens of England, fabulous London Bridge. A panorama of antiquity lay before them, and the men of the 47th witnessed it with intermingled awe and the irrefutable comparisons of American and English institutions, ours winning by virtue of sheer immensity but losing through the immutable years.

Sight-seeing was mixed agreeably with just "having a hell of a lot of fun." Enlisted men stayed at the Washington Club, a hotel operated by the Red Cross at low rates, and used it as their headquarters for seeing the shows and night spots. *Blythe Spirit*, *DuBarry Was A Lady*, *The Doctor's Dilemma* and others were playing and were well attended.

Highlight of the officer's social life was the formal opening of the officers' mess at Rougham. Dining hall consisted of a long tabled room, with two wings, one a card and reading room and the other a club room containing a bar.

WAAF and ATS officers, town girls were guests, as well as RAF officers, and an orchestra was to play for dancing. However, the evening was hardly well under way when the musicians complained of being lonely and wouldn't somebody please come out and dance. The bar was doing a land-office business, and Scotch put sizable dents in mess hooks.

Another dance was held for the enlisted men, and WAFFs were transported to the field for the event.

On 4 October 1942 the group was transferred to Horham airdrome, some 30 miles distant. Like Rougham, the new airdrome was yet in process of construction. It, too, was set among rolling hills, but the countryside had a more rugged appearance. There were a few Nissen huts for billets, but more were straight-sided made of plaster board. Although there was no snow, the weather was invariably cloudy and damp, and the coke-burning stoves in the billets adequately took the chill off the air; piratical forays on the King's coal pile built up the supply at intervals.

Noticeable on the menu were more American rations, and they provided a welcome respite from the mutton diet; the officers and men even acquired a certain relish for the daily tea and "heavenboard."

Air operations were necessarily restricted, as eight A-20s were all that had so far reached their destination, and the rest were awaiting weather on the North Atlantic route. Some pilots flew Miles Master and Tiger Moth training planes.

Baseball, to the English, was still in the nature of a spectacle, and frequent exhibition games were played. On one occasion, the officers returned to Rougham for a game and later were entertained by the Suffolk Regiment Band, one of the outstanding musical organizations of the British service.

Movies were a regular feature, and several stage entertainments were presented. The Ipswich Players, after giving a production at the field, were guests of the officers at a buffet supper in the mess.

The men of the 47th may have driven the jeep before, but they never had such a thoroughgoing exploration into its inner workings and hidden mechanisms as they had on what was ever after referred to as the "Warrington Fiasco," or "Who In Hell Swindled Me Into This Deal?"

The objective was to return 54 new jeeps from Warrington to Horham. Drivers and officers flew to Warrington in transports and enjoyed a short brush with English night life before the grueling trek back.

Previous to the journey, some of the men admitted that they had never driven a jeep before; before the trip was half over, the officers in charge revised that appraisal to convey the impression that some had never driven any kind of a vehicle before and that as far as they were concerned, would never drive any again.

The journey took three days, and to many it was an exercise in independent thinking. "This road looks nice and it goes in the right direction I think...To hell with the rest of 'em!" And a half dozen vehicles would take off cross-country, while frantic officers sped off to round them up again.

In the first place, one had to drive on the left-hand side of the road; too, all the road signs (which were removed as an obstacle to any invaders) had not been replaced. To cap it all, some of the jeeps had been earmarked for Chinese forces and came equipped with instruction plates inscribed with Chinese characters; none in the 47th professed a working knowledge of Chinese and if the driver entertained any doubts as to which gear position was for two or four wheel drive, it was just T/S! Three days of travel brought Anglo-American relations to a new low,

during which time countless bobbies learned new, strange cuss words born of pure inspiration. RAF outfits gave up hope for the Americans on the score of navigation, and three jeeps changed their contours. Thus, in due time the 47th's transportation was solved.

The 4th of the month now revealed itself as having some occult significance in regard to the Group's movement for again, on 4 November 1942, part of the Group was transferred to Ihsley Field. In command of Major Eugene B. Fletcher, the unit included 22 officers and 15 enlisted men; two days later another echelon left for Ihsley, 16 officers and 50 men under command of Major Gordon M. Roberts.

On the night of 14/15 November, Major Fletcher's outfit together with 10 officers and 30 enlisted men of Major Roberts' unit hoarded C-47 Skytrainers and took off for Casablanca. The remainder of the unit, originally destined to fly down the next night, was held on the alert at Ihsley Field, finally went on release status and on 12 December returned to Horham, then under command of Major Robert V. De Shazo.

While at Ihsley Field, the African air detachment had only special passes to town so imminent was the movement. Time was taken up with nightly movies, daily identification lectures, and French classes had even been planned.

Any jealousy between the 47th and the 310th Bomb Group (M) can be traced back to a hall game between the officers of the two groups at Ihsley. Twentieth Century Fox couldn't have turned out so bonafide a thriller, one of those affairs where the hero steps up to the plate in the last of the ninth with two out and bases loaded, and lays one out in the suburbs. Lieutenant Frederick L. Brown, 97th Squadron did just that. The 47th's lineup included Major Arthur Dixon catching, etc.

For the first time in England, the officer's mess laid claim to class, even in name. Sloppy Manor on Cuckoo Hill: it held a rich connotation of elegance. But such luxury was short-lived for in the last few days, the mess was moved nearer the barracks in anticipation of the move. Chow improved at Ihsley. A substance men vaguely remembered as meat put in its appearance, even though the servings were "quarter size."

Came Sunday morning, 8 November, and the splash of headlines and the terse news flashes on the wireless swept away all doubt as to where the 47th was going.

Meanwhile, back at Horham, the pilots were bringing in the birds of war and tales of the grim trip across the North Atlantic route. Then on 7 November, Lieutenant Colonel F.R. Terrell landed at Horham where he assumed command of the Group, relieving Lieutenant Colonel M. Green Jr. On this date and on the previous day, aircraft and crews began arriving.

S-2 was in its glory. Interrogation went far into the night, ale in hand stuff producing tales which circled cautiously around the truth but never quite touched it. There were plenty of rumors concerning mishaps en route, which gave rise to a certain amount of speculation but despite several crackups it turned out that only one plane and crew of the 97th Squadron was lost on the Iceland-UK leg.

There was a minimum of flying now, as the

ships were overhauled for the flight to Africa. The movement took on new urgency and nothing interfered. Nightly, the Grapes served as the clearing house for fact and opinion. It was a cheerful little pub situated in Hoxne (pronounced like oxen) which the 47th officers adopted as a social center, an "operations room" for ground operations, so to speak. The affable Mrs. B., a portly woman who took a motherly interest in the flyers, presided over the thatched-roofed meeting place. It is said, probably with a great measure of truth, that most major decisions were reached before The Grapes' blazing hearth. Sessions at the inn provided entertainment for the townspeople as well as the 47th officers; though the Group had one room to itself there were others where officers would be under the quizzical looks of the English come to see "those Americans."

Whatever fragments left of the gangster-cowboy legend were swept away by the side-show the Americans staged; on the other hand, it was supplanted by the firm conviction that all Americans were crazy. For example, a cherub-faced pilot who hails from Boston unconsciously did his bit to deal the "tough guy" fable a death blow by uttering at frequent intervals: "Well for heaven's sake!" The townsfolk thought him "just too priceless."

The planes that had started in the autumn from Westover were coming in a steady stream now. On 18 November in came Major Robert V. DeShazo, Headquarters, with Sergeant A.J. Kilousky and Sergeant Eddie E. Weidel and 1st Lieutenant Sidney Schwartz. Staff Sergeant Paul L. Thurmond and Staff Sergeant Melvin G. Coleman. Major DeShazo's gunners were assigned to the 85th Squadron, while Lieutenant Schwartz and his crew were of the 84th Squadron.

On 22 November into Horham came 1st Lieutenant Victor H. Beardsell, Staff Sergeant Felix DelGallo and Sergeant E.W. Roach, all of the 85th Squadron. This made 40 combat planes and crews that had reached the overseas station by 22 November. Lieutenant Colonel Terrell had brought in a 97th Squadron plane, while Major DeShazo, only other Headquarters officer in the flight echelon, had flown an 85th Squadron plane across. Each of the 84th, 85th and 86th Squadrons had nine planes and combat crews, while the 97th had eleven.

Moving day came again. On 24 November the 2nd detachment to Africa sailed from Liverpool and consisted of four officers and 100 enlisted men under the command of Captain David S. Davis, 85th Squadron Personnel was evenly split among the four squadrons.

All this time, Horham was only a way station on a three-continent procession to the funeral for Hitler's Afrika ambitions. The A-20s landed, received a checkup and were supplied with life rafts and emergency kits, then roared off into the South.

Lieutenant Colonel Terrell himself led the first unit of the flight echelon to Africa. In the flight were Lieutenant Daniel of the 85th Squadron and eight other officers of the 86th and 97th Squadrons. The echelon took off from Port Reath on 18 November, landed at Tafaraoui Airdrome near Oran, and on the 20th flew from Tafaraoui to Port Lyautey some 50 miles from Medouina,



Original air crews of the 86th Squadron in front of the operations tent, Youks-les-Bains, Algeria. (Courtesy of Chester Taylor)

the 47th's first African station, and one of the first fields on the west coast to be readied for air operations.

Instead of landing at Horham, the pilots arriving from the States after this period flew their planes from Prestwick, Scotland, direct to Honnington where the ships were to be put in condition for the UK-Africa flight.

For the flights to the United Kingdom, two gunners were carried, but on the hop down to Africa, a crew chief replaced one of the gunners to take care of any mechanical difficulties which might otherwise hinder delivery of the plane to Medouina.

Twenty-one pilots had come over on the *Queen Mary* with the advance echelon, and some of these switched with the ferrying pilots for the hop to Africa. Few of the pilots arriving later in England spent more than several weeks before they were off to the Dark Continent, hardly time enough to get used to warm ale, and to know a shilling from a tuppence.

Winter was coming on. Beyond the arrival and take-off of planes going through to Africa, little happened until the 47th noted that Santa Claus had been put on immediate standby but that it wasn't going to mean much to the children of England in the ways of toys and candy, for their manufacture had given way to war goods and those left were relatively high priced. So together the officers and men decided to give the children in all the surrounding area a real Christmas party. The soldiers, away from home in another land at Christmas time, felt the instinctive desire for giving, and everyone pitched in to see that the tots were well remembered.

Everybody contributed: the officers a pound each and the enlisted men as much as they wanted to give. In all, more than \$300 was collected and the search for toys was begun. The fund was enough to buy worth-while presents, more than just trinkets, and stores finally yielded treasure enough for any Christmas tree. For the

previous week, all had saved up their candy ration to be distributed at the party.

Then the big day arrived. Shortly before 1600 on an afternoon just before Christmas, truckloads of children began arriving from nearby villages, while others walked or cycled in to take part in an Anglo-American Christmas. In the Isles he is known as "Father Christmas" so the British tots were to see Santa Claus for the first time. Lieutenant C.O. Compton, 84th Squadron, pillow amidships and garbed in the red suit to which GIs had turned their thimble fingers, staggered in burdened down with a bulging bag, barracks, from which protruded brightly painted toys.

Eyes popped, and several hundred children who had once scoffed were now believers. It may be said that the party was a huge success.

On 6 January the 3rd detachment, all those of the 47th remaining in England except pilots and combat crews going through, left for Liverpool, and when their ship, the *Reina del Pacifico*, sailed the following day, the 47th's English Story ended.

For Gallantry In Action

by Harold F. Olsen

Well up Chesapeake Bay, far from any prying eyes, they went through their paces. Full packs, helmets, arms handy, they clambered down the landing nets and into assault boats, and keeping in mind every precept of Commando training, they stormed the bleak, sandy beaches of the Solomon Islands.

Among the men undergoing this beach landing training were nine officers and 94 men of the 47th Bomb Group (L), two officers and 23 men from each of the squadrons (84th, 85th, 86th and 97th), two Headquarters enlisted men and Major Marvin P. Hughes, commanding.

Beach landing was hard work. As the men swung onto the nets, crouched in the assault boats and "took" the unopposed beach, they grunted

the whimsical surmise that they were going to look funny as hell disembarking in such a manner in full view of English docks.

The English "angle" turned out to be a bum steer, for on 8 November 1942, these same men played a vital and heroic part in the invasion of Northwest Africa and the establishment of the second front.

To go back: The detachment had left Greensboro-Highpoint Airport, Greensboro, North Carolina on 4 October 1942 on SO 156 HQ 47th Bombardment Group (L) and proceeded to the overseas staging area at Langley Field, Virginia. Commanding the squadrons were: Captain Julian S. Pinkston, 84th; 1st Lieutenant John P. Hilliard, 85th; 1st Lieutenant Isadore Herman, 86th, and 2nd Lieutenant Harold F. Olsen, 97th. Personnel of the squadrons follows:

97th Bombardment Squadron (L)	
2nd Lt	Harold F. Olsen
2nd Lt	Jack F. Calnon
M/S	Karl L. Sorenson
T/Sgt	Phillip J. Elldridge
T/Sgt	Richard E. Gallup
T/Sgt	George H. Reiners
S/Sgt	Frank E. Crane
S/Sgt	Dominick J. Genard
S/Sgt	Harry H. Kiplinger
S/Sgt	Harlan H. Richards
S/Sgt	Albert R. Sanders
S/Sgt	Orval R. Spilde
Sgt	James R. Cain
Sgt	J.W. Clinkenbeard
Sgt	Henry J. Durbin
Sgt	Donald H. Howe
Sgt	Robert S. Molsbee
Sgt	Grover G. Rhodes
Sgt	James E. Wofford
Cpl	Leo C. Bielele Jr.
Cpl	James M. Bissey
Cpl	James Farrell
Cpl	Thomas H. Moore
Cpl	Joseph A. Rotondo
Pfc	Francis L. Seidel

At Langley Field the men plunged immediately into the work of preparing themselves for the huge task ahead. The day they arrived, 5 October 1942, they were issued new equipment including Model 1903 Springfield rifles for all men of grades 4, 5, and 6, and Thompson sub-machine guns for officers and all men of the first three grades.

To this day, the 47th men insist that the man who laid out the Langley Field obstacle and barrier courses was beyond all doubt a Section 8 case and should have been mustered out of the service years ago. Up and over, down and through. A dozen times. Tired? Shouldn't be. Try it another dozen times. Gotta get in condition. Ten days of that put the men in the pink. They had the best of food, good quarters, and no garrison duties, while the officers took care of supplies and supervised loading.

On 15 October the detachment departed from Langley Field by truck at 4:00 a.m. for Norfolk, Virginia, where the HQ men and officers and those of the 84th and 85th Squadrons boarded the USAT *Florence Nightingale*, and the 86th and 97th boarded the USAT *Anne Arundel*,

both converted freighters of some 10,000 tons. Eight days were spent on beach landing maneuvers. "Keep your heads and butts down, do you want to get them blasted off?"

By the time the ships weighed anchor and steamed back to Norfolk, the apprentice commanders of the 47th could press an attack with a certain degree of expertness.

On 23 October the convoy put to sea, after taking on additional supplies at Norfolk. Sections sailed off in different directions, rendezvousing 200 miles at sea and starting the 3,000-mile voyage to Port Lyautey, a distance which zig-zagging at eight-minute intervals stretched to 4,200 miles.

Aboard the *Florence Nightingale*, Major Hughs served as assistant troop CO, Lieutenant Eugene H. Karstens was ship defense officer and Captain Pinkston was mess officer. On the *Anne Arundel*, Lieutenant Herman commanded the 47th Detachment.

Five days out, the plan for the attack on Northwest Africa, called Torch, was unfolded to the officers and men. British and American Forces were to land at Algiers and Oran. American forces were to land at Casablanca and Port Lyautey. Eisenhower was in command of the whole venture. Patton commanded the Western Task Force.

Every preparation had been made. The ships had been "combat loaded" with light tanks, assault boats and tank lighters stowed topside, while the hold was as explosive a Dagwood sandwich as was ever put together. Lining the bottom of the holds were 500 and 300-pound bombs, with 100s on top. Then a layer of 80 octane gas, 100 octane over that, a layer of rations, then diesel oil, more gasoline, with a top "frosting" of hand grenades, all planked over and converted into bunk space for the men.

"If this tub ever gets a torpedo, she'll have one distinction: she'll go up, not down!" ...that was the standing joke aboard the convoy ships.

Come night, the men would congregate for the nightly poker game, each perched nonchalantly on a box of hand grenades. Should the game ever get dull, there was always the consoling thought that there was plenty of excitement around, all potential. Under cover of night on 7 November, the convoy arrived off the coast of French Morocco and carefully worked plans for the beach landing went into effect.

Throughout the voyage, men of the 84th and 85th Squadrons manned four 20mm guns on the decks flanking the captain's bridge. The gunners were to be relieved by Navy gunners upon an alert, but otherwise did 24-hour duty at their battle stations.

For the last five days at sea, corresponding with the *Florence Nightingale's* entrance into the combat zone, the 47th men took over complete responsibility for the four guns, and during the aerial attacks on the convoy as it stood off Port Lyautey performed their duties with such expertness that they won commendation, from the ship's captain.

The 47th officers and men aboard the *Florence Nightingale*, although they did not take part in the assault, were under intense fire from French coastal batteries and fighter planes. At one time, the shelling was so heavy that transports were forced to withdraw several miles to

sea. Several French planes were shot down in flames by our Navy fighters, while gunners on the outer ring of the convoy accounted for several more, while the USS *Texas* and the USS *Savannah* laid down a heavy barrage in an effort to silence the shore guns.

From the P-70 (*Florence Nightingale*) Tech Sergeant Charlie W. Adams was the first 47th man ashore, as he became aide and driver for Colonel Charles A. Piddock, A-3 XII Air Force, who assumed command when Colonel Demas T. Craw was killed while attempting a truce. Thus, Sergeant Adams became the first of the 47th on that sector to hear the memorable words "Shawkalat, shewing gom, hon-hon." Upon Colonel Piddock's departure from the ship, Major Hughs assumed command as troop commander.

For the men aboard the USAT *Anne Arundel* there was action aplenty. At exactly 11:15 a.m., Lieutenant Olsen and 10 men of the 97th Squadron were landed at Green Beach, south of the river, Sebou, near Port Lyautey—the first 47th men to step on African soil. They carried full packs, arms, ammunition and one and one-third days' field rations. K. Assault troops had landed at daybreak and severe fighting had followed. The beach was still under heavy artillery fire from the French fort, so fox holes were dug that afternoon just behind the dune line and the night spent in guarding prisoners.

The 2nd Battalion, 60th Infantry, commanded by Major Dille, landed on Green Beach south of the Sebou River and directly under the Kasbah. The 3rd Battalion, commanded by Major Toffey, landed on Red Beach north of the river, and the 1st Battalion under Major McCarley landed on Blue Beach several miles south of Green Beach. All three battalions encountered heavy resistance and were pinned down short of their initial objectives. On the following day, 9 November, four more 97th men were landed from the *Anne Arundel*.

At the request of the engineering beach commander, Lieutenant Olsen and his 14 men went out on two patrols to round up French and native snipers who were still causing some disorder on the beach. No snipers were found and no shots were fired, however. All the comforts of home were established later that day as they set up quarters in a vacant house at Mehdiya Plage, a beach resort and warmed-up field rations on a charcoal burner.

Heavy fighting continued all day the 9th so that by night fall the French fort had not yet been taken. That night General Truscott and Colonel de Rohan rounded up stragglers from Dilleys Battalion and laid plans to renew the assault on the Kasbah at dawn. A request was made of all other units to join in the assault. Early the morning of November 10, Lieutenant Olsen and his men were quick to answer the call for volunteers. They, along with a mixed group of medics, engineers and Air Corps personnel, formed a combat platoon of some 50 men which undertook to storm the fortress overlooking the mouth of the Sebou River.

The fort was situated on a high bluff, from which the rock-strewn approaches dropped away at a precipitous angle. The plan of attack was to proceed through a small village, approach the fort from the right, and work their way along a

road at the base of the fort using the embankment for shelter, and then cut through a hole in the wall and up the bluff to the fort's entrance.

There was nothing easy about the attack, for the fort was still very active, and besides the hostile mortar and rifle fire, they were uncomfortably close to the bombs dropped by Navy dive bombers on the fort, naval shelling of the fort and machine gun fire from another combat platoon.

When the machine gun fire was directed at them, Sergeant Crane turned to an officer and in a few blunt well-chosen words told him what he thought of anybody who'd fire at their own men. A moment later he saw a glistening Silver Star on the officer's shoulder. Apparently Sergeant Crane had covered the subject and all its ramifications in his brief remarks, for the then unidentified general had nothing of any importance to add to it. As it turned out, the general was in fact General Truscott, who was accompanied at that moment by General John K. Cannon, the air commander who had been sent by General Patton to find out how things were going at Port Lyautey.

A full account of the assault on Port Lyautey is included in General Truscott's book, *Command Missions*, pp. 79-120, where at page 119 he describes the volunteers as "a motley group of 70 or 80 men (collected) from along the beach—airforce mechanics, cooks, clerks and chauffeurs."

Coming through the group of scattered buildings, another member of the party decided to warm up for the attack by bagging any snipers lurking around so he kicked open the door of a house, tommy gun in hand. He was totally unprepared for what happened: an entire French family burst upon him like a bombshell and kissed him with an effusive welcome. Though the fort still resisted, there was no doubt as to how the people felt about the invasion.

Proceeding along the road to the fort, on every hand they saw the devastation wrought by the battle. On the pleas of a distressed French woman, Corporal Wofford put a horse bomb-victim out of its misery.

As they neared the fort, mortar and machine gun fire, while largely inaccurate, grew heavier. The men gathered near the gap in the wall on the west side of the fort and the ascent upward began. At this point, Major Dilley, the battalion commander of the assault troops who landed on Green Beach on the 8th, and who for two and a half days had taken severe casualties attempting to take the Kasbah, asked for air support. Eight Navy dive-bombers already in the air were diverted to bomb the Kasbah, which they did while Lieutenant Olsen and his men clung to the side of the hill. When the dust cleared, Lieutenant Olsen sent Sergeant Clinkenbeard and Private First Class Seidel through the wall and into the fort as scouts and followed closely behind with the rest of the combat platoon. Rifle fire from the fort was continuous but light, and the entrance to the stronghold was gained without casualties at about the same time that the remains of Major Dilley's 2nd Battalion reached the main gate on the southeast side. (According to Breuer's *Operation Torch*, 1985, 1st St. Martins Press, which contains a detailed account of the action at Port Lyautey, Dilley's Battalion suffered more than 225 casualties, dead and wounded in

the two and a half days fighting to capture the fort. In this book on page 235, Lieutenant Olsen and his men and the other "volunteers" are described as "a hodge podge of some 80 men who were collected: Air Force mechanics, clerks, drivers, cooks and formed into squads.") When the troops entered the fort, some 100 French soldiers came out of splinter trenches and 150 more came out from among the fort's building. All surrendered.

The combat platoon returned to Green Beach with the prisoners who were turned over to the 540th Combat Engineers, and all personnel except the men of the 97th returned to or continued to look for their assigned units. Lieutenant Olsen and his men proceeded to Brown Beach where they assisted Captain McBride of the 540th Engineers in clearing and preparing that beach for the arrival of landing craft. At 1500 hours, they proceeded up river by landing craft and took up duty unloading supplies. Lieutenant Calnon and the rest of the 97th men arrived, and the entire detachment took up quarters in two hangars at that airfield.

Later that day, the detachment was asked to assist the engineers in preparing the airfield for the arrival of a squadron of P-40s to be flown in off a carrier. Unfortunately, the P-40s started arriving before the bomb and shell holes in the runway could be prepared. The next assignment was to take an old French truck, make an A-frame life and "rescue" several P-40s which had not been able to avoid the bomb and shell holes. The detachment, augmented by additional personnel from the 47th Group Headquarters and the other squadrons continued to work on the airfield and the P-40s and to assist the engineers in unloading supplies coming in by landing craft until it was airlifted by C-47s to Casablanca on November 21.

On November 13, the detachments barracks bags, bed rolls and jeep arrived by landing craft. A change of clothing was particularly welcome by Lieutenant Olsen and the 10 men who landed with him on November 8 since they were still wearing the clothes they wore that day when they

waded ashore in salt water well above their waists.

For their participation in the assault on the fort above Mehdia, Silver Stars were awarded to the following men: Lt. Harold F. Olsen, M/S Karl L. Sorenson, T/Sgt George H. Reiners, S/Sgt Frank E. Crane, S/Sgt Dominick J. Genard, S/Sgt Harlan H. Richards, S/Sgt Albert R. Sanders, S/Sgt Orval R. Spilde, Sgt James R. Cain, Sgt J.W. Clinkenbeard, Sgt Henry J. Durbin, Sgt James E. Wofford, Cpl James Farrell, Cpl Thomas H. Moore and Pfc Francis L. Seidel.

For the second time in recent history, 11 November became an Armistice Day, as hostilities between the French and the United States were ceased in North Africa on that day.

At the Port Lyautey Airfield—later to become Crawford Field in honor of Colonel Demas (Nick) T. Crawford who was killed by a French sentry on November 8 while carrying a white flag as he attempted to negotiate a peaceful landing—other men of the 47th attached themselves to the 97th Squadron and on 21 November 1942, a majority of the men were flown from Port Lyautey to Cazes Air Base, Casablanca, and then went by truck to Medouina Air Base.

1st Det To Africa

A week after "D-Day," the air echelon of the 47th left England for Africa, to set up a base for flight operations. Under the twin shrouds of secrecy, and the chill fog which settled over the southern tip of the Isle, the 32 officers and 45 enlisted men of the detachment took off in C-47 transport planes. Under the command of Major Eugene B. Fletcher, the detachment was bound for Cazes Airdrome, Casablanca, French Morocco, and ultimately was destined for Medouina Air Base, about 18 miles southwest of Casablanca.

They left Horham at 0700 on 4 November, taking lorries to Diss and there boarding the London North Eastern Railroad at 0830, arriving in Liverpool Station at noon. There they boarded the Southern Railroad at 1245, detraining at



Officer's club, North Africa. (Courtesy of Monroe Scurlock)



Famed 47th bomber *Queenie* in flight. (Courtesy of Monroe Scurlock)

Ringwood at 1600, then going by lorry to Ibsley Field. The detachment remained there until 1700 on 14 November when the men lorryed to where they were to take the transports. The luggage was limited, and organizational equipment included only the bare essentials necessary to maintain operations until the rest of the echelons arrived from the States.

The first of the transports took off at 2030, their drab hulks swallowed up in the fog. Most awaited more favorable weather, and under the damp of the fog, men were, probably for one of the few times in their army careers, doing calisthenics willingly, this time to keep warm. More took off shortly after midnight, 0030 on 15 November, and started the long flight to Casablanca. The flight was anything but comfortable; the cabins were cold, and the early part of the trip found the men and officers stretched out on bed rolls and barracks bags in the rear of the cabin. The trip was to be made entirely over water, France, Spain and Portugal, where flak and fighters might be encountered, to be avoided. Most of the transports flew alone, making no effort to group.

Sunup came as the planes were off the coast of Spain, and several planes reported dipping below the clouds only to sight land, whereupon the "coal" was poured on and the course set to take them back over the ocean. Soon, Africa was sighted and the 47th's transports passed over the white-hued cities of Rabat, Sale, and finally over Casablanca itself, landing at Cazes. The first arrival was at 0930, and the remainder of the planes continued to come in the rest of the morning.

Two days later, 17 November, they were joined by seven officers and 60 men of the first ground echelon, which had taken part in the D-Day landing, and on the following day, the entire outfit went by truck to Mediouna. The airfield was littered with wrecked French P-36s shot up by our Navy fighters during the initial assault, a hundred jobs were to be done to ready the base for action.

With Major Fletcher as base commander, work began. There were some 20 French barracks and buildings to be cleaned, plans made for the smooth operation of the squadrons, and a superhuman effort on the part of the 21st Engineers to lay the steel-link runway.

Sailing from Liverpool on 24 November

1942, the second detachment of the advance echelon reached Oran 6 December. Under command of Captain David S. Davis, the unit consisting of four officers and 100 men left Horham Air-drome at 2230 on 23 November, reaching the Liverpool PE at 1630 on 24 November, embarking an hour and a half later.

Their ship was the *Derbyshire*, one of 30 some vessels in the convoy, and it carried about 6,000 troops through seas they swore would make Davy Jones reach for the "Mothersills." To add to the fun and confusion, they had a helmsman who had joined the Navy to see the world, and apparently was going to do it all in one voyage.

The 47th men were the *Queen Mary* veterans so the voyage of the *Derbyshire* was under critical eyes. On several days the seas were such that even crew members admitted that the weather was "a little heavy." The decks took on a "Palace of Fun" appearance as the GIs slid back and forth, some of the more seasick men harboring the secret hope that the rail would give way and put an end to the nonsense. The helmsman, it was later confessed, apparently had more maritime magic than he was first credited with, for on the night of 4 December the convoy steamed through the Straits of Gibraltar. It was after midnight, and clouds covered the sky, but on either shore, at Gibraltar and on the Spanish Moroccan side, bright lights lay glistening rays on the sea. The convoy rode at anchor in the fortress harbor over night and the officers and men, those who did not sleep, had ample time to study the Rock, looming in shadow.

They were impatient to reach Africa, food being no little consideration. It is alleged that one business-like GI sold a can of C ration (meat and vegetable stew) for a pound, although oldsters who were weaned on C rations declare that the story is obviously false, and that no one with intelligence enough to wear the army uniform would pay \$4 for a can.

The convoy was split up at Gibraltar, and, at about 4:00 the next afternoon, 5 December, the *Derbyshire* and another transport or two escorted by two destroyers started for Oran. As the dusk deepened, the 47th men could look back and see the Rock disappearing in night, and they noticed that the phosphorous glow as the waves washed the bow of the ship was much brighter

than in the Atlantic. At dawn, early risers could see the coast of Africa, and at 1000, 6 December, the convoy had put in at Oran, the troops disembarking at 1415. Still walking with a rolling gait, the echelon marched at 1730 into the hivouac area, which the rainy season had converted into a sea of mud, but it was Land!

The echelon spent four days at the Oran Camp, during which time they oriented themselves to the new world of trackless electric trolleys, oranges, tangerines, French newspapers, camels and burros.

At 1700 on 10 December the echelon broke camp, reaching the station at 2300 and entraining at 0200 on 11 December for Mediouna, where the rest of the Group was then stationed.

The trip was a tedious one. The train averaged about 18 cars, but the men swear that it stopped at every whistle stop and dropped off a car or took one on. Constructed about 1900, the coaches weren't much on the comfort side, but the scenic panorama for some time took their minds off the ride. Numerous tunnels pierced the rugged route, and at one point near Casablanca the ocean was sighted. Arriving at Casablanca late in the afternoon, 13 December, the unit was brought by truck to Mediouna Air Base, and the men had their first hot meal in two weeks. The "piece de resistance" was Spam, and the boys ate it like wolves.

One thing had not changed, however, as the officers and men exchanged greetings with buddies they hadn't seen in months, they again stood in mud!

The history of this portion of the 47th's advance echelon, the third detachment sent to Africa, begins two months before it sailed from Liverpool on 7 January 1943, and covers a period of intermittent alerts and numerous changes in station.

Its nomadic and "on edge" existence began 6 November 1942, when 16 officers and 50 men under command of Major Gordon M. Roberts left Horham Airdrome for Ibsley Field, there to board air transports for Africa; as it developed, many difficulties were ahead.

Actually, the first week was spent at the Salisbury Plain Camp where the echelon was constantly alerted for movement, and the personnel was briefed and issued escape kits, money and emergency packets. The unit was necessarily restricted and expected momentarily to move.

Back to Ibsley by truck at the end of seven days, the echelon there met Major Eugene B. Fletcher and his 22 officers and 15 enlisted men who were to take off first for Africa. At that time, Major Roberts' echelon was supposed to fly down the following night. However, 10 officers and 30 men of Major Roberts' echelon joined that of Major Fletcher's and the whole outfit took off in the foggy night of 14/15 November, while the rest stayed on the front line of a new war of nerves.

"Where will we have breakfast, in England or Africa?" was the question that characterized the next two weeks of uncertainty. But finally the echelon was released from the movement alert, at the same time releasing a flood of rumors which dwarfed any previous wave of surmise.

At regular and frequent periods the stories circulated that the Army Air Forces personnel

already in Africa was enough to do the job and that no more would be sent, that the echelon was to be transferred to the 8th Air Force, and even that their ultimate destination was Norway.

Attention was directed toward keeping in trim, and relaxing from the "on-again, off-again" ordeal. Daily marches kept the men in shape, while the relaxing was done at Bournemouth, which came close to resembling an English Miami Beach, a summer resort on the coast.

After three weeks, the echelon received orders to report to Horham, its original station. If the men needed any additional experience in handling organizational equipment (which they insisted they didn't) they received it on the rail trip back to Horham, when they changed coaches five times, the shift entailing transfer of all equipment.

At Horham, Major Roberts' group met Major Robert V. DeShazo, approximately 20 pilots, some 30 enlisted men and seven ground officers. At the end of three more weeks the merry-go-round came around to movement orders again and this time the echelon caught the brass ring; it was really going through. 6 January, and although orders described it as to a "secret destination," there was little doubt in anyone's mind as to where they were going.

First estimates on the length of the voyage ran between 19 and 21 days, and it had every prospect of being a repetition of "Water, water

everywhere and not a drop to drink," so Lieutenant John E. Buhler, 84th Squadron, volunteered to embark upon a quest for spirits. His search was successful; a bulging bag testified to that, and although the price was a little steep (some of his brother officers hinted aloud that he must have purchased the last remaining bottles of Napoleon Brandy) the "cheer" was at hand, and there was no grounds for believing that the voyage shouldn't be a pleasant interlude.

Heartbreaking climax to the venture came when the prized bag toppled to the station platform in a crash of shattering glass. It was carried mournfully into the train, which for the journey to Liverpool smelled like Joe's Bar and Grill on Saturday night. Otherwise, the trip was without incident.

Trucks took the 23 officers and 52 men from Liverpool station to the docks, where the contingent boarded the *Reina del Pacifico*, a converted luxury liner of 23,000 tons which in peace time had catered to South America travel.

Though the quarters were even better appointed than those on the *Queen Mary*, there was the same disparity between officers' and the men's chow. In the officers' mess the menu ran to eggs and beefsteak, while in the men's dining room the food just ran!

The ship sailed on 9 January and the first few days out were rough. Finally, the seas calmed, the troops got their sea legs and could

Service Streamers: None.

Campaigns: Antisubmarine, American Theater; Algeria-French Morocco; Tunisia; Sicily; Naples-Foggia; Anzio; Rome-Arno; Southern France; North Apennines; Po Valley; Air Combat, EAME Theater.



L to R: Willard, Goodwin, Ernst, Tippins. (Courtesy of Monroe Scurlock)



47th bomber Nancy Lee, being made ready for action. (Courtesy of Walt Hanna)



Planes of the 47th Bomb Group in flight. (Courtesy of Ed Burnely)

enjoy the sun on deck and the rest of the eight day voyage to Oran followed familiar convoy pattern.

On the night of 15 January, the men were treated to their first look at Africa when Spanish Morocco glittered off the starboard bow. By the next afternoon the convoy had entered Oran Harbor, the echelon disembarking the following morning, 17 January, and proceeding by trucks and then by train to Ste. Barbe du T'letat from which they marched five miles to a bivouac area on a barren hillside, "Mud Hill."

The march had driven every thought but that of food out of the men's minds, and an officer of the depot outfit suggested a likely spot for the kitchen.

"Kitchen? ...what kitchen?" Major Roberts demanded.

But even this bit of logic failed to stump the obstinate officer who countered somewhat weakly, "Well, if you had a kitchen, this would be a hell of a nice spot for it."

Undaunted, the officers and men threw together a kitchen of sorts in short order. Gas drums were converted into boilers and C rations were thrown in, to be fished out with sticks, so that evening the men had a hot meal, exactly on the correct site for the kitchen.

The echelon stayed at Ste. Barbe five days, during which time there was opportunity to visit Oran and study the African Way of Life, from "shawkalat" to "shewing gom." On the sixth day, 22 January, the echelon went by truck to Tafaraoui Airdrome near Oran and boarded five C-47 Skytrains, landing at Blida about noon.

In many respects the night spent at Blida was memorable, for the tiny village was apparently the last outpost of the champagne and beef-steak world. The transports weren't to leave until

morning, and with the evening off, officers and men trooped to eating places on the Square and enjoyed champagne at \$1.25 a bottle, and a succulent meal of French fries, coffee and wine for something less than a dollar.

Next morning at 0800, the echelon again boarded the planes and after a four hour flight across the top rim of Africa, landed at Youks-les-Bains on 23 January 1943. When men and officers of the 85th and 97th Squadrons motored to Thelepte, the entire echelon had reached their new stations.

84th Bombardment

Lineage: Constituted 84th Bombardment Squadron (Light) on 20 November 1940. Activated on 15 January 1941. Redesignated 84th Bombardment Squadron (Tactical) on 1 October 1955. Discontinued, and inactivated, on 22 June 1962.

Assignments: 47th Bombardment Group, 15 January 1941; 12th Air Force, 2 October 1949; 9th Air Force (attached to 363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Group), 17 October 1949; Tactical Air Command, 1 August 1950 (attached to 363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, 1 September 1950); 47th Bombardment Group, 12 March 1951; 47th Bombardment Wing, 8 February 1955-22 June 1962.

Stations: McChord Field, Washington, 15 January 1941; Fresno, California, 11 August 1941; Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma, 17 February 1942; Greensboro, North Carolina, 16 July-c. 17 October 1942; Mediouna, French Morocco, c. 18 November 1942; Youks-les-Bains, Algeria, 6 January 1943; Canrobert, Algeria, 29 March 1943; Thelepte, Tunisia, 5 April 1943; Souk-el-Arba, Tunisia, 13 April 1943; Soliman, Tunisia,

c. 1 June 1943; Malta, 21 July 1943; Torrente Comunelli, Sicily, 10 August 1943; Gerbini, Sicily, 20 August 1943; Grottaglie, Italy, 24 September 1943; Vincenzo Airfield, Italy, 15 October 1943; Vesuvius Airfield, Italy, 11 January 1944; Capodichino, Italy, 22 March 1944; Vesuvius Airfield, Italy, 25 April 1944; Ponte Galeria, Italy, 10 June 1944; Ombrone Airfield, Italy, 24 June 1944; Poretta Airfield, Corsica, 15 July 1944; Salon, France, 5 September 1944; Follonica, Italy, 22 September 1944; Rosignano Airfield, Italy, 4 October 1944; Grosseto, Italy 2 January 1945; Pisa, Italy, 17-22 June 1945; Seymour Johnson Field, North Carolina, c. 12 July 1945; Lake Charles AAF, Louisiana, 9 September 1945; Biggs Field, Texas, 20 October 1946; Barksdale AFB, Louisiana, 19 November 1948; Langley AFB, Virginia, 17 October 1949-21 May 1952; Sculthorpe, England, 31 May 1952-22 June 1962.

Aircraft: B-18, 1941-1942; A-20, 1942-1945; A-26 (later B-26), 1945-1949; B-45, 1949-1957; B-66, 1958-1962.

Operations. Antisubmarine patrols, December 1941-January 1942. Combat in MTO, 22 January 1943-30 April 1945.

Service Streamers: None.

Campaigns: Antisubmarine, American Theater; Algeria-French Morocco; Tunisia; Sicily; Naples-Foggia; Anzio; Rome-Arno; Southern France; North Apennines; Po Valley; Air Combat, EAME Theater.

Decorations: Distinguished Unit Citations: North Africa, 22 February 1943; Po Valley, 21-24 April 1945. Air Force Outstanding Unit Award: 1 July 1958-30 June 1960.

Emblem: Upon a golden edged in red a red devil with white horns courant, white speed lines trailing and carrying over his right shoulder a black drop bomb (approved 9 September 1942).

85th Bombardment

Lineage: Constituted 85th Bombardment Squadron (Light) on 20 November 1940. Activated on 15 January 1941. Redesignated 85th Bombardment Squadron (Tactical) on 1 October 1955. Discontinued, and inactivated, on 22 June 1962.

Assignments: 47th Bombardment Group, 15 January 1941; 12th Air Force, 2 October 1949; 9th Air Force (attached to 363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Group), 17 October 1949; Tactical Air Command, 1 August 1950 (attached to 363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, 1 September 1950); 47th Bombardment Group, 12 March 1951; 47th Bombardment Wing, 8 February 1955-22 June 1962.

Stations: McChord Field, Washington, 15 January 1941; Fresno, California, 11 August 1941; Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma, 17 February 1942; Greensboro, North Carolina, 16 July-17 October 1942; Mediouna, French Morocco, c. 17 November 1942; Thelepte, Tunisia, 9 January 1943; Youks-les-Bains, Algeria, 16 February 1943; Canrobert, Algeria, 27 February 1943; Thelepte, Tunisia, 30 March 1943; Souk-el-Arba, Tunisia, 16 April 1943; Soliman, Tunisia, 1 June 1943; Malta, 22 July 1943; Torrente Comunelli, Sicily, 12 August 1943; Gerbini, Sicily, 20 August 1943; Grottaglie, Italy, 24 September 1943;

Vincenzo Airfield, Italy, 15 October 1943; Vesuvius Airfield, Italy, 11 January 1944; Capodichino, Italy, 22 March 1944; Vesuvius Airfield, Italy, 25 April 1944; Ponte Galeria, Italy, 13 June 1944; Ombrone Airfield, Italy, 26 June 1944; Poretta, Corsica, 15 July 1944; Salon, France, 4 September 1944; Follonica, Italy, 16 September 1944; Rosignano Airfield, Italy, 4 October 1944; Grosseto, Italy, 10 December 1944; Pisa, Italy, 17-23 June 1945; Seymour Johnson Field, North Carolina, c. 11 July 1945; Lake Charles AAF, Louisiana, 9 September 1945; Biggs Field, Texas, 20 October 1946; Barksdale AFB, Louisiana, 19 November 1948; Langley AFB, Virginia, 17 October 1949-21 May 1952; Sculthorpe, England, 31 May 1952-22 June 1962.

Aircraft: B-18, 1941-1942; A-20, 1941-1945; A-26 (later B-26), 1945-1949; B-45, 1949-1957; B-66, 1958-1962.

Operations: Antisubmarine patrols, December 1941-January 1942. Combat in MTO, 10 January 1943-30 April 1945.

Decorations: Distinguished Unit Citations: North Africa, 22 February 1943; Po Valley, 21-24 April 1945. Air Force Outstanding Award: 1 July 1958-30 June 1960.

Emblem: Over and through a yellow orange disc, border light turquoise blue, a skeleton wearing tuxedo and silk hat, proper, riding in open cockpit of large red aerial bomb, smoking a cigar, and twirling a revolver about the right forefinger, all emitting white speed lines to rear (approved 9 September 1944).

86th Bombardment

Lineage: Constituted 86th Bombardment Squadron (Light) on 20 November 1940. Activated on 15 January 1941. Inactivated on 2 October 1949. Activated on 23 March 1954. Redesignated 86th Bombardment Squadron (Tactical) on 1 October 1955. Discontinued, and inactivated, on 22 June 1962.

Assignments: 47th Bombardment Group, 15 January 1941-2 October 1949. 47th Bombardment Group, 23 March 1954; 47th Bombardment Wing, 8 February 1955-22 June 1962.

Stations: McChord Field, Washington, 15 January 1941; Fresno, California, 11 August 1941; Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma, 15 February 1942; Greensboro, North Carolina, 16 July-17 October 1942; Mediouna, French Morocco, c. 17 November 1942; Youks-les-Bains, Algeria, December 1942; Canrobert,

Algeria, 21 February 1943; Thelepte, Tunisia, 30 March 1943; Souk-el-Arba, Tunisia, 16 April 1943; Soliman, Tunisia, c. 1 June 1943; Malta, 22 July 1943; Torrente Comunelli, Sicily, 13 August 1943; Gerbini, Sicily, 19 August 1943; Grottaglie, Italy, 27 September 1943; Vincenzo Airfield, Italy, 12 October 1943; Vesuvius Airfield, Italy, 13 January 1944; Capodichino, Italy, 22 March 1944; Vesuvius Airfield, Italy, 25 April 1944; Ponte Galeria, Italy, 9 June 1944; Ombrone Airfield, Italy, 23 June 1944; Poretta, Corsica, 12 July 1944; Salon, France, 5 September 1944; Follonica, Italy, 19 September 1944; Rosignano Airfield, Italy, 4 October 1944; Grosseto, Italy, 2 January 1945; Pisa, Italy, 15-23 June 1945; Seymour Johnson Field, North Carolina, c. 15 July 1945; Lake Charles AAF, Louisiana, 9 September 1945; Biggs Field, Texas, 20 October 1946; Barksdale AFB, Louisiana, 19 November 1948-2 October 1949. Sculthorpe, England, 23 March 1954; RAF Alconbury, England, 15 September 1955; Sculthorpe, England, 5 August 1959-22 June 1962.

Aircraft: B-18, 1941-1942; A-20, 1942-1945; A-26 (later B-26), 1945-1949; B-45, 1949; B-45, 1954-1957; B-66, 1958-1962.

Operations: Antisubmarine patrols, December 1941-January 1942. Combat in MTO, 14 December 1942-30 April 1945.

Service Streamers: None.

Campaigns: Antisubmarine, American Theater; Algeria-French Morocco; Tunisia; Sicily; Naples-Foggia; Anzio; Rome-Arno; Southern France; North Apennines; Po Valley; Air Combat, EAME Theater.

Decorations: Distinguished Unit Citations: North Africa, 22 February 1943; Po Valley, 21-24 April 1945. Air Force Outstanding Unit Award: 1 July 1958-30 June 1960.

Emblem: On a light turquoise blue disc, border white, edged black, the head and shoulders of a caricatured black wolf, with white face, red nose, tongue, and eye, wearing yellow gloves, white cuffs, and a black, battered top hat, highlighted grayed red violet and orange, sneaking from behind a large, white cloud formation in sinister base and dropping, with the dexter forepaw, a black aerial bomb, highlighted grayed red violet and white, all in front of four, white, crossing searchlight beams and two antiaircraft bursts, proper; in dexter fess a decrescent, caricatured moon with red eye and features outlined black (approved 8 March 1945).

97th Bombardment

Lineage. Constituted 20th Reconnaissance Squadron (Light) on 20 Nov 1940. Activated on 15 Jan 1941. Redesignated 97th Bombardment Squadron (Light) on 14 Aug 1941. Inactivated on 31 Mar 1946.

Assignments. 47th Bombardment Group attached 15 Jan 1941; assigned 14 Aug 1941 to 31 Mar 1946.

Stations. McChord Field, Washington 15 Jan 1941; Fresno, California, 11 Aug 1941; Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma, 15 Feb 1942; Greensboro, North Carolina, 16 Jul-17 Oct 1942; Mediouna, French Morocco, c. 17 Nov 1942; Thelepte, Tunisia, 27 Dec 1942; Youks-les-Bains, Algeria, 15 Feb 1943; Canrobert, Algeria, 21 Feb 1943; Thelepte, Tunisia, 31 Mar 1943; Souk-el-Arba, Tunisia, 30 Apr 1943; Soliman, Tunisia, 1 June 1943; Malta 23 Jul 1943; Torrente Comunelli, Sicily, 12 Aug 1943; Gerbini, Sicily, 19 Aug 1943; Grottaglie, Italy, 27 Sep 1943; Vincenzo Airfield, Italy, 17 Oct 1943; Vesuvius Airfield, Italy, 13 Jan 1944; Capodichino, Italy, 22 Mar 1944; Vesuvius Airfield, Italy, 25 Apr 1944; Ponte Galeria, Italy, 12 Jun 1944; Ombrone Airfield, Italy, 28 Jun 1944; Poretta, Corsica, 15 Jul 1944; Salon, France, 7 Sep 1944; Follonica, Italy, 19 Sep 1944; Rosignano Airfield, Italy, 9 Oct 1944; Grosseto, Italy, 6 Dec 1944; Pisa, Italy, 31 Mar-25 Jun 1945; Seymour Johnson Field, North Carolina, c. 11 Jul 1945; Lake Charles Army Air Field, Louisiana, 9 Sep 1945-31 Mar 1946.

Aircraft. LB-30, 1941-1942; A-20, 1942-1945; A-26, 1945-1946.

Operations. Antisubmarine patrols, Dec 1941-Jan 1942. Combat in MTO, 28 Dec 1942-30 Apr 1945.

Service Streamers. None.

Campaigns. Antisubmarine, American Theater; Algeria-French Morocco; Tunisia; Sicily; Naples-Foggia; Anzio; Rome-Arno; Southern France; North Apennines; Po Valley; Air Combat, EAME Theater.

Decorations. Distinguished Unit Citation: Po Valley, 21-24 Apr 1945.

Emblem. On a medium blue disc, border yellow-orange, a caricatured gray and white rabbit with forepaws folded across chest, seated on red aerial bomb with yellow-orange tail fins, all falling toward dexter base. (Approved 9 Aug 1944.)



A 47th BG A-20 soars before the face of Vesuvius. (Courtesy of Tom Ratts)



A formation of 47th BG planes in flight. (Courtesy of Tom Ratts)



The regrettable loss of a 47th BG A-20. (Courtesy of Tom Ratts)



Courtesy of Earl Hiller.

WAR STORIES



THAT FIRST MISSION

by Lester "Lucky" Wollard

Some things in life stand out as extremely unique or memorable. Most of us can recall easily our graduation day, or wedding day, the first baby, and etc. We who served in WWII can all remember vividly where and what we were doing on that dreadful Sunday, December 7, 1941, "Pearl Harbor Day." We veterans can almost re-live our enlistment day, and those of us with pilots license remember in detail our first solo. Mine was just after the war.

That first mission, the fact that it was "the first" makes for a lasting impression, and my first actually was not much unlike the other five. That's right, I only did six. But mission number one was far, far different in one way, because of one very special exception, and yours truly, Lucky Wollard, may have been the only American airman ever to do this. Follow me...

The 47th Group with our A-20s arrived in North Africa in 1942, and early 1943 found us pretty active in the war. Our equipment was what ever we had brought over. Our personal gear was also what ever we had. This was in the days before "flak gear," i.e. "flak suits, flak helmets. Any protection we needed in those planes we took along. Our head protection was the GI tin helmet, and our flyers wore them a lot in the early months. The top gunners preferred cloth or leather helmets because of the wind. Wearing a tin helmet if you got your head a little too far

left, right, or up, you could lose your helmet (with your head in it).

I was part of the 84th Squadron, and on my first mission I flew in the nose of (I think) number four. A comforting thought of being in the nose of number four was that it had a flexible 30 caliber machine gun in the nose, where I would be. Why was this mission special or unique? Well when it came time to climb in the plane I had no helmet. No tin hat, no pot. Couldn't find it, and couldn't borrow one. What to do? Well laying around in some stuff nearby was a "German helmet," a left over from some scrap. Little ole Lucky Wollard grabs the Kraut hat, straps it on and climbs aboard the A-20.

It is possible that I was the only American ever to fly in combat on a mission, wearing a German helmet, a kraut tin hat on his pumpkin head. Could be!

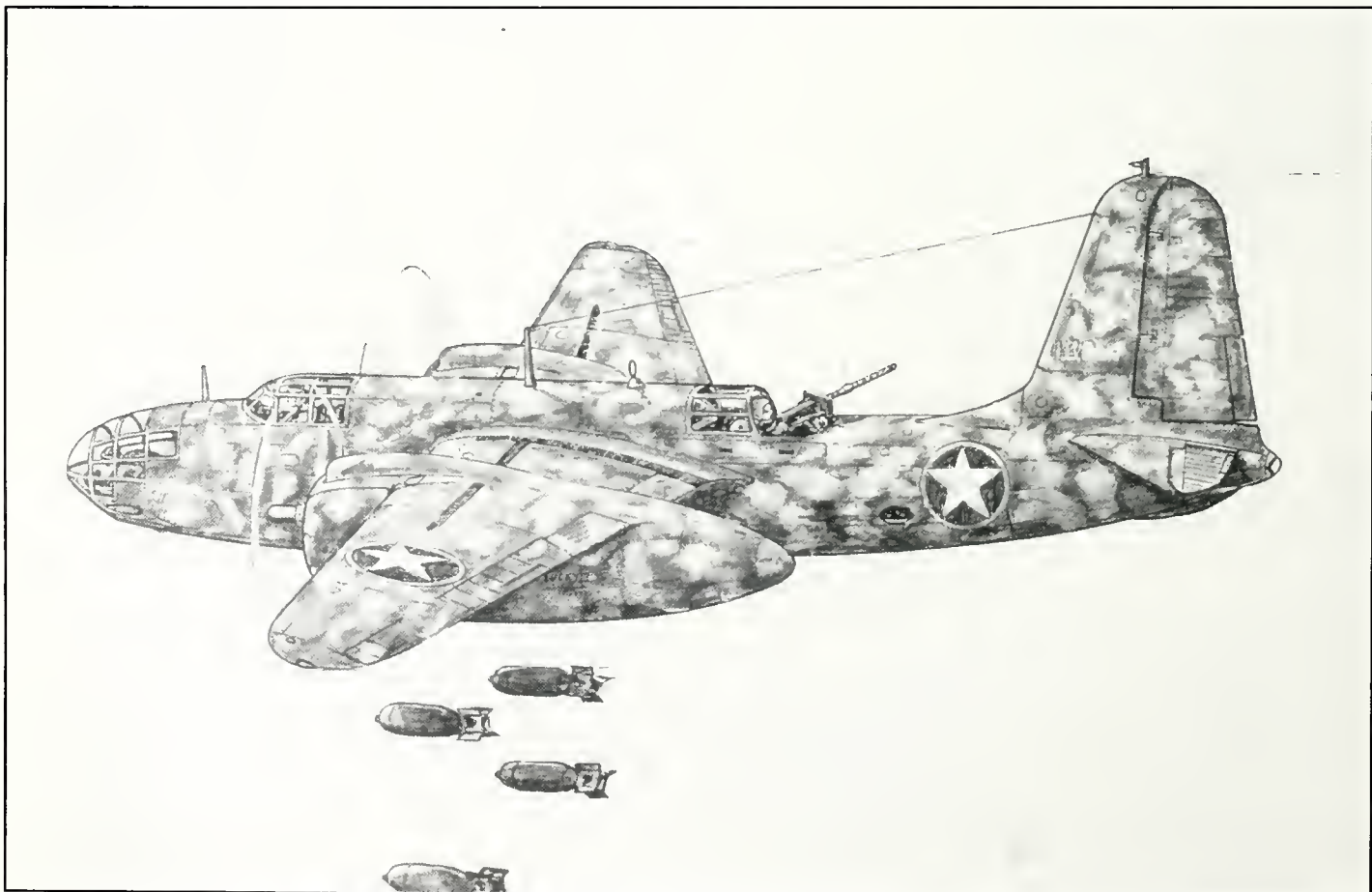
On this mission, as on all group flights, the airplanes "form up" and then climb for altitude. We were to bomb from medium altitude, which if I remember right was about 11,000/12,000 feet. As we reached 10,000 feet, I remember taking in those long slow deep breaths we learned to do for more oxygen. I cannot remember the other crew members on this mission. Sorry.

We reached the altitude, and soon approached the target. This is when things began to happen with me. There were no enemy fighters that I saw or knew of, but up comes that flak. Antiaircraft fire that is aimed at us, and it's in abundant amounts. "No sweat so far" I thought, and then suddenly smack in front of number four



Taken June 1944 at Vesuvius airfield. Front: John Coma. Middle L to R: Akom, Bennett, Lake, Reiners. Back L to R: Wufford, Boyjian, Kappan. (Courtesy of John Coma)

blossoms a black ugly blob, and swoosh we are through it. I looked around, checked myself and the plane, and I got suddenly quite worried. Not about being blown up or worse. I was worried about that dumb German helmet I was wearing. Sure it may stop a small projectile, but I'm thinking about, "what if I have to bail out?" "What will the Jerries think?" watching me float down in one of their own bonnets! I couldn't get my mind off of that, until that is, that we dropped those 500 pounders. I felt the plane lift, watched the bombs fall away midst the flak burst. A few seconds later I looked up, and no flak! Great! Why? because we were in a diving left turn doing over 300 mph. Looking back up and right were those black ugly puffs, but we were out of there, and gone, and for some reason I was no



Precise drawing of an A-20, by Lester Wollard.



Personal grooming in the 47th Bomb Group. (Courtesy of Tom Ratts.

longer too concerned about drifting down wearing a German helmet. We hit that target by the way, "Bingo" "clobbered it" was our expression.

We flew back all safe, but when we landed, and I climbed out of that A-20 still wearing the Kraut helmet, I remember the late Don T. Smith look at me, shake his head, laugh a bit and walk away. OK! OK! so I wore a German helmet on a mission, big deal. I was never charged with, or convicted of being real bright. But let's face it, it did make for a unique memorable mission, right?

I would like to share my second mission here, because it may fit in also. It was some weeks later. It was an easy mission, and I had my own helmet. The airplane was 84th's number 22. The crew, Captain Ted Broman, pilot; top gunner, Jack Botts; bottom gunner, Wilbert Welch; and me, Lucky Wollard, in the nose.

A month or so before this, one of our planes was shot down. The crew: Broman, pilot; Jack Botts and Wilbert Welch, gunners; Lieutenant George Land, bombardier. Broman crash landed the plane and a German ME-109 strafed them on the ground. All four were wounded, but all survived that mission. Lieutenant George Land was killed a week or two after this with a small piece of flak in the heart. No flak vest yet, too bad. Broman, Botts and Welch recovered and returned to flight duty.

This my number two mission as mentioned with Broman, Botts and Welch in plane 22. The mission was over the small island of Pantellaria, just off the African coast. As the formation approached the island, we were treated to a beautiful unforgettable sight. Below us in the Mediterranean was an invasion fleet, swirling and weaving off shore, waiting to go in after the bomb drop. The A-20 flying next to us took a picture of that fleet with good old number 22 right in the picture, and there is Pilot Broman, Gunner Botts and Lucky in the nose. Welch is not visible in this shot.

Wilbert Welch would tragically lose his life a week or so later, when the plane he was in caught fire; both gunners bailed out, too low.

Ted Broman is still with us today, looking good with his famous smile. It was he that got the very first 47th Group reunion together in Denver, Colorado in July 1977. Jack Botts has done well, looks great, tells great stories and lives near Fresno, California. Lucky Wollard lives in

Quartsite, Arizona, still preaches some, loves to cut rocks and fly if they let me.

NIGHT INTRUDER BOMBER CREW

by Eugene B. Boward

Near midnight on November 11, 1944, I collected my flight gear for my 51st and last A-20 Havoc bombing mission. This was to be a night intruder attack on the last remaining bridge over the Po River in northern Italy. I was with the 86th Squadron, 47th Bomb Group, 12th Air Force. Ours was the only American unit engaged in these single-aircraft night attacks on German convoys, troops, guns, airfields, etc. My previous night missions had ranged from pure "milk runs" to insane night-time low-level raids.

That night I would fly for the first time with a close friend, Staff Sergeant Schultz (top turret gunner) and his pilot, Lieutenant Wright, with Lieutenant Dowdell as bombardier/navigator.

Take-off was routine and we climbed on-course toward our assigned target area. There was little ground activity as we crossed the "front lines." Two 40mm guns (German and American) were dueling with tracer ammunition. The German gun ignored us; however, a short time later we took light, but accurate, flak and I was certain our A-20 was hit, though there was no evidence of damage.

Later, as we neared the northern end of the Apennine Mountains, I again heard our plane take a hit, but this time there were no tracers or exploding flak. None of our crew reported any flak. I was uneasy as I mentally pictured a Luftwaffe nightfighter hanging back in our blind-spot and lobbing 20mm hall ammunition our way, with no visible evidence that it was there. Unlikely, but...

I was looking over my 50-caliber Brownie toward the pitch-dark mountains below when Lieutenant Dowdell reported excitedly that we were losing altitude rapidly. The pilot, Lieutenant Wright, confirmed this and stated he could not hold altitude, even with wide-open throttle.

As a precaution, I began pulling my machine gun from the escape hatch to stow it against the side of the aircraft just as Lieutenant Dowdell salvaged our bombs. The gun's storage latch did not function and the gun fell back downward on three attempts before finally remaining latched. I was shaken because Schultz and I could not get out the hatch with that gun in place. Just as I completed my task, Lieutenant Dowdell came over the intercom with "Bail out! Bail out!" and the plane rolled violently.

Glancing backward I saw Schultz's turret seat drop and I rolled forward and out into the darkness, pulling my rip-cord immediately. I fell down through a tree for the easiest landing imaginable. My knees never bent, but I did land in a small, cold, stream.

Schultz and Dowdell landed hard in open areas and both sustained some back or leg injury. We three (Lieutenant Wright was killed) got together within two days with a British major who was stationed behind the lines for liaison with the Italian Partisans. The major arranged for us to live-in with an Italian family. Later he sent a message to us to prepare to walk back

through the German-held territory and front lines on November 19-20.

We had a grueling 30-hour walk over partially snow-covered Apennines with a large group of Partisans, plus three other American airmen, two escaped POWs (American and New Zealander) and six or eight German GIs who also wanted to be on the Allied side of the front lines. During that time we were twice involved with German patrols. Before the first patrol could catch us, a German (Austrian) captain, now with the Partisans, invited our German pursuers into a wine shop and got them all drunk. The next patrol, encountered just as we were passing through the front lines, shot-up our group, but none of the Allied or German GIs were hit.

During this last patrol encounter I (who was in full-American uniform) was asked by Partisans to walk in front of our group so that our own United States troops would not shoot us up by mistaking us for the enemy. With the exception of Lieutenant Granecki and me, all of our big group went around behind the mountain ridge to escape the German rifle-fire; consequently, we two found ourselves way out in front and all alone. Lieutenant Granecki (escaped POW) asked me to accompany him in an attempt to contact our American troops. So we proceeded, and without further trouble made contact with the 92nd Infantry Division around 1330 on November 20. We asked the infantry commander at the nearest command post to alert his troops for arrival of a large group of armed, but friendly, Partisans, evadees and others. They arrived OK about an hour or two later.

Lieutenant Dowdell, Staff Sergeant Schultz and I completed our evasion in less than nine days. We rejoined our squadron and were sent home around Christmas 1944.

UNIQUE RADAR BOMBING TECHNIQUE

by Marion Akers

By the early part of 1945 Allied forces had pushed the Germans to the northern part of the Apennine Mountains in Northern Italy and had secured the high ground overlooking the Po Valley. Atop one of these high peaks the Allies set up an extended range radar station, which had a commanding view of the northern slope of the Apennines and a major portion of the Po Valley. For our night interdiction and search and destroy operations, this was a most welcome facility and capability. It could vector and track us to positions near enemy troop concentrations, ammo dumps, enemy convoys, bridges, traffic bottlenecks and a most welcome capability to occasionally warn us of a "hoggie" approaching on our tail.

Lieutenant Colonel Reginald Clizbe "Cliz" now 47th Group Deputy CO saw another potential use for this facility. With its ability to accurately track and position our aircraft over precisely located targets, "Cliz" foresaw the potential capability to accurately deliver bombs on target during bad weather in the target area. All that was lacking was something that could tell the aircraft precisely where and when to release the bombs. With this in mind, he set about finding a way to marry the radar site tracking capa-

bility with the accurate bomb delivery capability of the Norden bombsight which we now had in our A-26C aircraft. What he needed, he found, was some way to trick the Norden sight into thinking it was on an airplane in the air driving in toward the bomb release point, when actually it was on the ground on the radar plotting/tracking board. He recalled those early days of instrument flight training and the "blue beetle," the Link trainer and its "bug" that tracked your flight in the Link on a piece of paper on a plotting board, and you never left the ground.

He got the parts of a Link trainer he needed, only a few knew where or how and nobody else cared. Then he, and few carefully selected skilled electronics personnel, worked with the technicians at the radar site to bring into being a uniquely simple capability from what initially appeared to be a technical impossibility.

Here's how it worked. A crew is assigned a radar bombing mission with a given bomb load; 47th Group personnel, trained on the Norden sight are with the radar site personnel to select the appropriate target, input necessary data to the Norden bomb sight, select direction of bomb run, IP (Initial Point) altitude and airspeed to fly. Upon arrival in an assigned area, the aircraft is vectored to the IP at specified altitude and airspeed; bomb doors are opened over IP, airspeed, altitude and heading nailed. At radar, the aircraft is being tracked down the bomb run, ground speed checked and cross checked with Norden sight which is then locked in with radar tracking and continues to track toward the bomb release point; but, one thing is missing, the bomb sight has no input to the PDI (Pilot Direction Indicator) instrument in the aircraft cockpit to tell the pilot if he is drifting to the right or left of track.

"Dr. Clizbe" had a fix for that - utilizing the radio range function of the Link trainer. This was tied in with the radio at the IP. As long as the aircraft tracked down the bomb run line on the plotting board, the pilot received the steady tone "On Course" signal on his radio; if drifting to the right, he would begin to get an N () signal coming in, or if drifting to the left he would begin to hear the A () signal. Upon reaching the bomb release point, the signal was stopped and the pilot hit the salvo button - Bombs Away! Simple, this could be flown in any weather, and was. Also sorties returning from a non-productive search and destroy mission in their assigned areas, could contact radar, give them their bomb load info and be assigned to, and bomb, an appropriate target (if any) within the range of the radar.

The early missions revealed that bomb hits were generally a little long due to the inherent pilot reaction time lag in hitting the salvo switch. This was adjusted by a split second earlier cut-off on the signal. Also, on a few aircraft before the war in Italy ended, the salvo switch was tied in with the radio so that it would be activated automatically when the signal cut off, so the bombs were actually being released from the ground.

Flying one of these missions for the first time gave you a funny feeling, sitting up there in the soup, knowing your bomb sight was 10,000-12,000 feet below you on the ground. But, it worked, and it worked well, as was seen from bomb damage assessment photos taken on the following days.

Who said successful organ transplants had not been done at that time? "Dr. Clizbe" and his Link trainer donated organs proved otherwise.

As far as I have been able to determine, this was the first time this technique was used for delivering bombs on target and, oddly enough, it also may have been the last.

TALES FROM THELEPTE

by Frank Broeg

Early morning at Thelepte Airfield on a cold damp February 8, 1943, Staff Sergeant "Piney" Harris borrowed my raincoat to make his daily run to the local latrine (an open air split trench) about a block away.

"Piney" had just assumed an operational stance when screaming in from the north, with cannon and machine guns spitting lead, a German ME-109 fighter zoomed over the split trench. Without a moments hesitation, Sergeant Harris dove into the latrine as one of our A-20 bombers exploded on the airfield just behind him.

Sergeant Harris came dragging back to our underground quarters and you could smell him a half block away. He was complaining the Kraut SOB almost killed him. Harris washed that raincoat with GI soap a couple times a day for several days, but the odor persisted. Finally with a loud protest, the tech supply sergeant replaced that "shredded" raincoat.

BATTERY CART

by Frank Broeg

Tech Sergeant Kooiker, Sergeant Thurman and Sergeant Broeg designed and built a tow cart for hauling four 24 volt aircraft batteries. It had a long tow bar and two P-40 tail wheel assemblies. It was always in demand for jump starting

the preflight checkout of our A-20 bombers. The battery cart was always charged to full capacity.

On another early morning strafing raid, a ME-109 blew up our battery cart. The right wheel, axle, and tire were destroyed as well as two of the 24 volt batteries.

Thurman, our welder immediately started cutting off damaged parts, while Broeg located two more serviceable 24 volt batteries. "Big John" Kooiker disappeared for a couple hours and returned with a big grin on his face. "Sergeant Broeg," he said "over across the field I found a P-40 about 1/2 way through an engine change." So at dusk, Kooiker and I made our way across the field to that P-40 undergoing an engine change. "Big John" lifted up the tail assembly and I removed the tail wheel and axle. I had just slipped it under my jacket when a MP captain drove up in a jeep and asked for our name, rank, serial number and outfit. Also he said, "at 8:00 a.m. the following morning report to MP Headquarters at the gate."

Kooiker and I returned to our work area and with Thurman's help spent one-half the night getting the battery cart in working condition for its preflight demand.

The rest of the day "Big John" and I worried about our forthcoming meeting with that MP captain. Later that day, the main road had a lot of tank and truck traffic going down the road away from the front. Shortly thereafter, word came out from 85th Squadron Headquarters that Rommel had broken through Kasserine Pass and we had to evacuate.

As we were being trucked away from Thelepte Airfield, demolition squads were blowing up any and all aircraft that couldn't be flown out, and that included that P-40 with no tail wheel.

We always wondered what the punishment was for "borrowing" a P-40 tail wheel.



Members of the 47th taking advantage of downtime to engage in swimming. (Courtesy of Ed Burnely)

TWO TO TUNIS

by Lester "Lucky" Wollard

It was near the end of April 1943 when the North African campaign was nearing its end. The 47th Bomb Group had played a vital role in helping defeat the Axis armies. The 47th with their fast twin engine Douglas A-20B light bombers had achieved a great deal, and had taken their licks and their losses. The four squadrons had served in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. Souk-el-Arba had been an active base, and we were now near a small town named "Ainbeda" (named after the hot baths there).

These stories are about men from the 84th Squadron. Out on the "line" where the aircraft were dispersed the crew chiefs, mechanics, engineers, armorers, etc. would stand by the planes readying them for the next mission. Most of the time one would just wait, visit, BS or guess about this or that.

Waiting and sitting under plane number nine (the famous *TuTu*) was crew chief Lew Dillon, Lucky Wollard, Bob Fry and Burns Yates. The talk got around to, "What do you do when flying, when you gotta go?" "Well for Pete's sake" said Lew Dillon, "you use the relief tube." "Has anyone used it? or tried it?" was the question. "How does it work?" "Let's try it." "OK."

It seems like it was Bobby Fry that climbed up into the top gunners seat, grabbed the cone shaped relief tube and gave it a shot to try it out. Standing outside the others watched to see it come out the copper tube on the side of the plane. Nothing, zilch. So Lucky Wollard says, "I'll show you how, I was a gunner." and Lucky puts a load through the relief cone. Lucky looks out over the side and everyone says, "Nope, nothing."

Burns Yates, about this time gets a bright thought. "It must be plugged up" he said. "Let me get some wire and unplug it." Lucky, still looking over the side, Lew and Bobby all watch Burns push a wire up the copper tube. All of a

sudden, out it comes, and Burns jumps like a scalded cat, but too late. He caught a pretty good stream right down the middle. Everyone laughed like crazy, Lew Dillon was on the ground, even Burns laughed, but not as hard. True story folks, ask em.

"Two to Tunis" this was a short time later, and if memory serves correctly it was May 6, 1943. Lucky Wollard was on his last day of KP and his good buddy, Mel Hannah, were doing something in the mess tent when they got the news that Tunis had fallen and was in Allied hands. Our two brave heroes got the swell idea of going to Tunis. Should be fun they thought.

Early the next morning our two heroes head out for Tunis, and possibly without permission??? They caught a ride on an American truck for a ways, then a British major drove them in a four door Plymouth for a few miles. Lucky and Mel then hitched a ride in a British Lorry (truck). They were in the back near the dusty tail gate; early afternoon the lorry stops and the Limeys (which they insisted we call them) piled out. They asked Mel and Lucky, "Wud you blokes lika cupa tea?" "Tea? Sure, guess so, OK." The Limeys then gathered some sticks, twigs and bits of wood and built a fire right along side of the Lorry. Then placed an old looking aluminum pot right on the fire, threw in a couple pinches of tea leaves, and soon presto! Tea! We loved it, it tasted really great. The 84th duo rode into the city of Tunis with the Limeys. Tunis had been liberated for one day now.

The city of Tunis was very busy and crawling with lots of Americans and British troops, most in their field gear with guns and all. Our two 84th men were very surprised to see "Germans." Yes German soldiers actually walking around and no one seeming even to notice or bother. There had been so many enemy surrendering, they could not all be picked up, and they were just "hanging around" until?

Lucky and Mel went into a saloon type place (perhaps for soft drinks?) and sat at a small

table near the center of the room. Across the room six German soldiers sat with their drinks at a large table. Our brave airmen watched them, gave a nod of the head, and lifted a hand. The Jerries merrily waved back. It was a strange situation.

About 20 minutes later, a very large American MP stepped inside the door, stopped, with hands on hips and looked around. He spied the Jerries and called out, "OK you birds, outside, schnell, out." The Germans, knowing what was up, all nodded and held up a hand like, "Hold it, we have drinks here." The big MP again said, "Outside schnell" and waved his hand motioning "out."

Well the Jerries got up, some still drinking, and proceeded out, followed by the MP and more were outside waiting. Lucky Wollard and Mel Hannah followed after and watched the Germans ushered up into a GI truck, which hy now had about a dozen in the back. Standing near the back of the truck, one large German that had been in the bar, looked at Lucky and thrust his hand in the air. Mel Hannah said, "Lucky, he just gave you a Nazi salute." Well Lucky returned the salute with the American "One finger salute" Hey! he's a prisoner now, who's afraid?"

Our two proud airmen spent the night in a very dark, very cheap hotel, with a bunch of drunk Limeys who cried most of the night, claiming that each was the lone survivor out of their original outfits. Those guys had had a real nasty time, and we believed most all they said. After all they had the Gin

Next morning bright and early, the two 47th men headed back to base and arrived mid-afternoon. As they turned onto the hase road they were aghast and surprised to see the entire group packed up, loaded on trucks, lined up ready to head out for, you guessed it, Tunis.

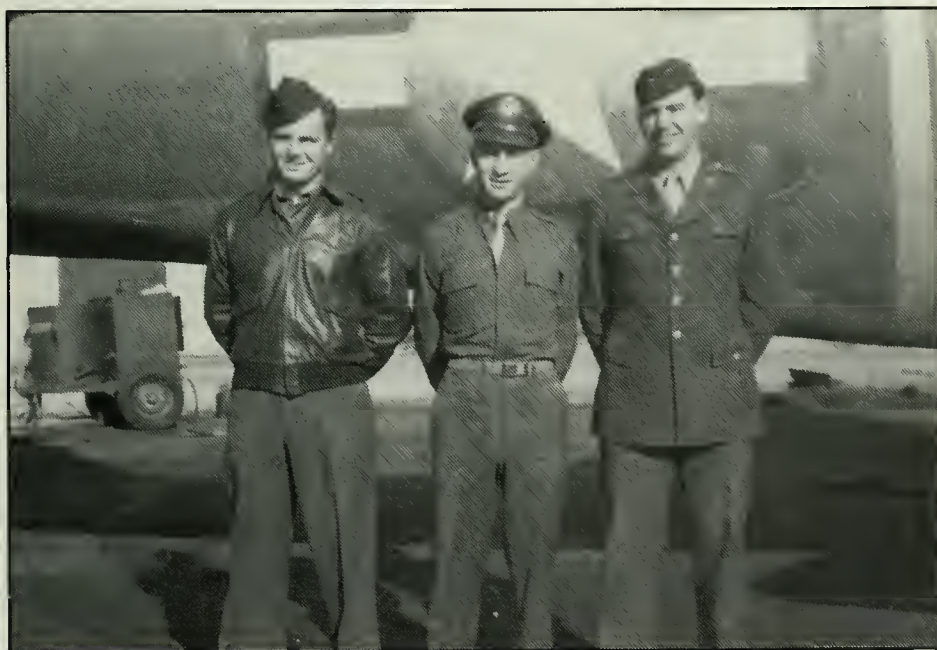
One of the cooks hollered at Mel, and said, "Your stuffs on this truck, get in." So Mel gets in and he's fine. Then in another truck a guy tells Lucky, "Your things are here Lucky, hut First Sergeant Thompson wants to see you right now." Oops, Wollard goes to the last standing tent and asks First Sergeant Tommy Thompson "You want to see me?" "Wollard" he says, "where in the hell have you heen? I've been looking all over for you" Lucky says, "Oh, ah, in town Sarge" "Oh Yeh" says Tommy, "where bouts? I've looked all over for you." Lucky said, "Ah, did you look in the bar?" "Yes I did" said Tommy. "Did you look in the bakery?" "I did" said Thompson. Lucky then said, "Oh did you look in the Baths?" "No I didn't look there" said Thompson. "Well that's where I was" lied Lucky "in the baths." Big First Sergeant Thompson pointed his finger at Lucky saying "Wollard, get on that truck now."

The group convoyed north and through the city of Tunis and we saw no Germans on this trip. The convoy drove east a few miles to a large flat plain, near the small town of Hamminleaf. At this base we would have some interesting and some sad experiences also.

PANTELLARIA SURRENDER

by Paul Glenn

While we were flying missions against air-fields in Sicily, attempts were being made to



L to R: S/Sgt. Paul L. Gallagher, Lt. Marvin Syferd, S/Sgt. William J. Flynn. Joined 47th Bomb Group, 97th Bomb Squadron in Ottaviano, Italy, April 1944. (Courtesy of Gallagher)

obtain the surrender of the Italian garrison on the island of Pantellaria. We had in the 85th Squadron, a very unassuming young pilot whose name was Buster. One day Buster's A-20 was shot up rather badly, and he became convinced that he could not make it back to Tunisia. He decided to land on Pantellaria, taking the chance that he would not be blown out of the sky. Buster landed safely, and, to his astonishment, was greeted enthusiastically by the Italians who had wanted to surrender for some time. Within several days the surrender was consummated and Buster was flown back to his squadron, a bit the worse for all the celebratory drinking he had enjoyed. The official history of that campaign makes no mention of Buster or the occurrence recounted.

AS I RECALL

by Tom Ratts

To: Jimmy Thomas Davis, cherished grandson with interest in military events.

I was selected on the second call, first draft, June 27, 1941, into Fort Benjamin Harrison N/W of Indianapolis, Indiana. The first group to be drafted into the Air Corps and assigned to the 86th Squadron, 47th Bomb Group (L). He was on KP washing serving trays before the first day was out. Had never known of such a large dish from which to eat and thought it rather crude, resembling a hog's trough or slop bucket.

Max and I had formed a habit of dancing at the Riviera Club on Sunday afternoons. The girl I was dating cut that relationship quick. She didn't want any part of a soldier. She was up front with a common attitude.

Our little band of Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana recruits were shipped by "The Chief" pullman car to arrive in Fresno, California on the fourth of July. We had the full works with dining car, porters, white sheets and no side tracks for freights. That was the last of that kind of soft life! We were quartered at the city's Chandler Field in peram tents for our recruit training. It was 104 degrees in the shade and no shade, so it was quite an adjustment for me since I had been working in an air-conditioned office. There was a lone B-18 on the tarmac which never flew, just woke us up in the morning instead of a bugler. In the back row of the tent with me were a couple really good guys: Bill Seaman (Youngstown, Ohio) and Louis Buhler (South Bend, Indiana). Bill soon went to Officer's Candidate School and Louie eventually became 1st Sergeant, 85th Squadron. The sweat really rolled to the center of the wool blankets as the cot sagged. Most of us were resolved to serve our year as a good convict would. Made the statement several times, "I will go if the other two guys do," a popular phrase at the time. But really didn't get my call number until requested by employer to do so, in order for them to get an idea as to when to hire a replacement. Figured that selective service would let me know. When they did, I sold my 37 Ford to Uncle Howard Thorn, most of which was loan assumption. When Harold traded it long after the war, cousin Fae cried until they bought it back.

Our camp staff was a reserve Spanish appearing captain and one lone Sergeant Costello.



A 47th Bomb Group A-20 crashes and burns on landing. (Courtesy of Ed Burnely)



The Germans blew a dike and put us out of operation for about three days. (Courtesy of Tom Ratts)

A recruit by the name of Sparks was soon the orderly room officer. Sparks used to say, "You guys are just laying here wondering about who is kissing your girl. I don't have to do that as only two know where she is, me and God." He was from the hills of Kentucky.

A little redhead by the name of Stevens said that he had been a National Guard drill sergeant, so they appointed him. He promptly ran us over a bunch of stakes and wire. Later, he said that he was a truck driver, so missed the shift down on the 6x6 coming down the mountain of Sequoia National Park. He did swing out of the line to miss the convoy. I can see the captain yet, trying

to catch us in a jeep, but we must have approached 90 mph. The good Lord must have been with us as there was no problem. Later during a War Bond pitch his question was, "What if we lose this war?"

Sparks was transferred to a code rather than to specific organization. We were not supposed to talk about it. He just kind of evaporated and so we didn't. He went to the War Department Intelligence Agency

Didn't really get much basic training as the biggest detail was building Hammer Field Air Base north of the city. Didion (Sandusky, Ohio) was a carpenter, thus detail chief of a crew of

any volunteer who could drive a nail. I didn't volunteer as I was just serving my time. Didion was also a kind of loan shark, two dollars for three at pay day. He said that he performed a needed service. We were paid 21 per month. Later found him to be a most generous person.

The \$21 went for cigarcettes, a few fishbowls of beer and a little cheap whiskey for the Saturday dance at the Rainbow ball room. Of course we were not supposed to leave the camp but, after all, we were the guards with broom sticks. We really did walk post with broom sticks.

At the end of six weeks training we were really glad to join our assigned squadrons at Hammer Field, which were just arriving from McCord Field, Washington where the unit had been activated. They had barracks and mess sergeants. Perhaps not so glad to meet some of the "Youse Guys" NCO's. They got the Youse guys title from saying "Youse guys do this and Youse guys do this." I sincerely acknowledge a National debt to these guys that will never be paid. Without them the troops would never have been trained to meet the formidable foes of Germany and Japan. There were three groups, one being unemployables in the 30s economy with 10 to 12 years service, the second which had seen the need in the last couple years as the Gerry's and Russian strafed and bombed innocent non-combatants, women, children and old people of Poland or anyone else who dared raise their heads. The third group were the knowledgeable senior NCOs which had as much or more service. I recall a few as follows: Group Sergeant Major LaGripo, capable and rough as they come; Group Personnel Sergeant Major Peckham, quiet, methodical, capable and confident; 1st Sergeant Nackerude, a capable administrator who really tried to call us all by name but was much overloaded; Kingsley, line chief, didn't have quite so many, so did learn his men and their level of competence; Glenn, armament chief, a clean cut straight shooter; Van Horn, operations chief, a dapper gent who didn't think that DB 7s or B-18s were designed to ride piggy back; Neal, a gambler man who denied that luck had anything

to do with who won; Musgrave, an electric and prop specialist and a rare breed; Howe, tech ops chief, always appeared on Sunday morning with cuts, bruises and bloody. Never found out if it had been done by man, woman or husband.

I don't wish to take anything away from the officers of that period as they were heavily involved with administration and raising their flying proficiency. Recall the regular Army lieutenants as follows: Robinson, an excellent pilot, true blue and an enlisted man's officer; Patterson, operations officer, hot shot pilot and handsome; Smith, quiet, stable and more attuned to military courtesy; Simpson, big jolly blond, a steady pilot, dependable and really handsome.

When we joined the outfit Louie went to the 84th Squadron and Bill to the 97th. However, we continued to go to the Saturday night dances. I developed a slight crush on a little Italian girl, "Toni," but she was much too smart to get involved with a soldier. The people of Fresno were much more hospitable than the Midwest, but they didn't much want any daughter-soldier cases. Not so with Louie's dance partner, she wanted to take him home with her. Louie really panicked and could hardly get away from her. Bill disappeared one night, just couldn't find him for about an hour. Finally found him on the commode, drenched with sweat head to foot, and all he could say was "Oh my G___, Oh my G___." Wasn't really funny then but much so after we decided that it was the corn squeezin's.

Did find a couple of good Catholic friends in the 86th Squadron, Bob "Curly" Garnier, Lawrenceburg, Indiana, and John "Hewie" Whalen, Detroit, Michigan. Curly was a capable, quiet sort, I later worked with him on morning reports throughout the war. Hewie was much moon-eyed over his bride-to-be; he bought a wedding ring about the time she was to start west to marry him. I won the ring in a two-handed game of black-jack, even though I had let him double up several times to re-coup losses. It is difficult to understand how I won so many times straight. He would sit on his bunk cross-legged and glare at me. I kept it until the day she was to

arrive, then gave it back to him. She was furious with him, and I don't think she ever trusted me. Miller stood up with them; he was Protestant which was verboten at that time. I really thought he was Jewish when he first joined the squadron, he was heavy set with black hair and wouldn't share cookies from home. I received a home made cake from a lady in New Jersey, who had gotten my name and address from a Carnation Radio Program. I wrote to thank her and she referred me to a niece as a pen pal; that didn't last long.

The barracks were two story frame with bathroom (eight showers, commodes and lavatories) on the ground floor and NCO rooms at each end with us in the bays between. Corporals really ranked high. One morning Corporal Daily was giving us the old rise and shine. I told him and he listened. "Daily the day I outrank you, I am going to look you up wherever you are and chew your a___ out until it falls out on the ground." He didn't say a word but turned and went into his room. When I made staff, Sergeant Curly called me and wanted to know what time I was going to come to the squadron to chew on Daily. I never did because I had learned that the rough talk was just his duty. In fact I was somewhat ashamed that I had said such a thing.

Forest Thompson (an Ohio Chandler Field recruit) and I hitchhiked to LA together a couple times as he also had some relatives there. On one return trip we rode with a family who invited us to a Chinese dinner if we had time to go out of the way a few miles. I will never regret going. It was my first food of that type. The platter seemed three feet long and we ate till we had had enough. On one return trip, Marcella and Bob brought me back on their way to Yosemite. The group commander kept telling his officers and men that they didn't have any unwilling draftees; I just didn't yet know that I was willing.

Several of us reported to the orderly room for clerical work assignments. Curly was more mature and capable so just seemed to fit as sergeant major. Hewie, Andy Sopko and I sat on footlockers at the back of the room. 1st Sergeant Nackerude became embarrassed that he couldn't find jobs for us, because he just didn't have the time to instruct. Finally they sent us with a sergeant to Group Headquarters S-1 Personnel Office as a section. Sat on another foot locker a couple days until I revised a letter of transmittal of records during noon hour, which the sergeant had been attempting to write all morning. When he came back he tore it out of the typewriter and filed it in File 13 (waste basket). About then they got the repercussions of having filled a requisition for two carloads of shipping clerks, with the people that they didn't want for shipment for Hawaii. The Corps commander had learned that those shipped were not shipping clerks and had the two cars turned around and returned to the Group. I think the fur had really flown. Also received instruction to use the Army Qualification Card (WD Form 20), a McBee key sort form system to search and reclassify to fill the requirement. There was a call for a clerk for the Headquarter Classification Section, and since I was on the sergeants list in regard to the letter, I was selected! Thus, a Sergeant Zinn and I became a section of two. We went into a scramble round-



The ruins of Pompeii. (Courtesy of Tom Ratts)

ing up the cards from squadron sections, orderly rooms, etc., then shuffled them to select from 1st or 2nd qualification which we classified on the basis that if the word shipping was used on the form they became shipping clerks. These rosters were hand carried to the commander's office by the Adjutant Major Sinclair. He made at least eight trips back and forth as the air got bluer on each trip. I assume some of the squadron commanders had some differences of opinion as to who should be sent, but we finally filled the requirements of the Corps Area. Some of these people were later at Hickam Field, Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941.

A Captain Burton C. Cockran (Air Reserve, Santa Anna, California) joined the group as assistant adjutant. Zinn and I were seated just outside of his office with the personnel Sergeant Major Peckham on our right. We then designed a system using columnar pads reflecting number authorized, assigned and over or short by MOS (Mil Occupational Specialty) for each squadron and total by group. This was supported by rosters of personnel and was due out to the squadrons each Thursday which enabled the commanders and staff to review duty assignment; also, to better defend their positions at group commander meetings on Friday. I never saw anyone leave those meetings with a smile and suspect that the commander used this method to train the squadron staffs in becoming familiar with their personnel. Captain Cochran was a genuine gentleman with a stern face, always courteous and fair even in the most adverse environment.

About noon on a Sunday morning, I was asking for a pass; Sergeant Nackerude was looking in the file for it when the phone rang. He answered and about fell off his chair, but said "The Japs have bombed Pearl Harbor." I said "Where is Pearl Harbor?" He said, "Get out of here, you are not going to get any pass." I returned to the barracks and announced the news. Most of the reaction was the same as mine, but the NCOs came charging out of their rooms and were about to tear me apart until I half convinced them that what I said was correct. The senior NCOs went to the orderly room and we went to lunch. When we returned there was a bunch of shovels around the barracks. Sergeant Howe was driving stakes to outline the zig-zag trenches for defense of the barracks area. For the first time he really looked like he knew what he was doing, even though his eyes looked like two pieces of beef steak. He did know when he finished, it was without breaking any walks and afforded a cross fire of almost all areas. We dug until about 2:00 a.m., took about four hours sleep and finished the next morning. Lo and behold, there were 1903 Springfield rifles for everyone, seemed to appear as if by magic. Further, we could hear much more activity on the flight line.

The next day we got riot training with crudely simulated airplane plants in the LA area and was announced that they just didn't know what was going to happen in that area due to the high concentration of Japanese Americans and labor unions. Just a few weeks before, the media got upset over a soldier bayoneting a striker in Richmond, Indiana. The technique was to spot the riot leader, probably using a bull horn or other signal device. A mob is just like a centipede, cut

off its head and the riot dies as well. A floating "V" formation that floats to the weak spot is probably the best physical approach to reach the leader. Use your cold steel bayonet and rifle as a club. Do not fire unless you are really challenged and don't point a gun at any person unless you intend to kill him. Above all, Do not fire indiscriminately in the crowd.

I don't think they got a flight off on Sunday but the next day they had a couple B-18s on patrol of the Pacific. Later joined by some A-20s and the hours on patrol were exhausting. Soon the 85th was outposted at Sacramento Airport and later the 97th Squadron, the better to patrol the California Coast. They received credit from the Presidio Army Corps Area for sinking two Jap subs, which was verified by photos of oil slicks on the water. DB-7s (English model of A-20) began arriving to full strength of 12 per squadron, plus a few other planes more suited for patrol duty.

Of course Pearl Harbor stopped the discharging of pilots to serve as civilians in the China Air Force. The 28-year-old draftees that had not been discharged as over age were extended to the duration of the War plus six months, the same as the rest of us who had been in for a year. 1st Sergeant Nackerud and a couple other enlisted were discharged to serve as electronic and propeller specialists with the aircraft companies. The Group Sergeant Major LaGripo was directly commissioned as major in the Air Reserve and Group Personnel Sergeant Major Peckham was commissioned a few months later. We heard the president's declaration of war speech on the radio in our personnel office, and all stood throughout even though it was not required. After a couple weeks we did get a pass to town and couldn't buy a drink. If you ordered one, someone would insist on paying for it. If they didn't, it was on the house. That didn't last long either.

Early in 42 the Group was reorganized with a new Table of Organization, eliminating the HQ&HQ Squadron as just HQ 47th Bombard-

ment Group (L) AAF and re-designation of the 20th Recon Squadron as 97th Bombardment Squadron. I remained assigned to the squadron but worked in Headquarters. I tried to return to the squadron by working in operations. That lasted about two days and Major Sinclair went on a rampage to bring me back in HQ Personnel Classification. He gave me the old baloney as he had when I applied for training as air mechanic, gunnery or officer candidate. It went something like, "You are too valuable right where you are; probably more valuable than if you finished one of these schools." Again I say baloney but then I didn't say it out loud. The personnel office was decentralized to the squadrons from about 60 to 10 people; chief, two classifications, four morning reports and three officers pay.

A cadre of about 600 men was broke off from the group as we were also functioning as an on-the-job training organization and it was interesting to see the scramble. Sergeant Zinn and I had our hands full with testing, reclassification and a new report of classification Status Report to Corps Area HQ for computer processing. One day Sergeant Kingsley came charging past Sergeant Peckham to me and stated, "they tell me that you are rating these guys airplane mechanic just as they come out of these schools." I explained that we were classifying them as airplane mechanic military occupational specialty (MOS) apprentice, having no real indication of competence or pay level. He was satisfied.

We soon moved to Will Rogers Field, south of Oklahoma City. What a different train ride it was, in coaches whose windows rattled and let cinders in as if they weren't there. Had box cars for kitchens and used barrels and tubs for stoves as there was only one field stove. The Southern Rail tracks were so rough that 35 mph was maximum speed. I think we were put on sidings for all freight trains to pass. We did have one fair meal en route on one of these sidings. At least we didn't spill as much.

An influx of guys who had enlisted the day



Ground crews prep a plane for launch. (Courtesy of Tom Ratts)

after Pearl Harbor were received about as soon as they had completed their basic training. Harvi Travis (newspaper editor Endicot, New York) was welcome to the section. A very steady, loyal and self-motivated troop; Lesley Cleveland (six months short of Ph.D. in history from Duke University) a mature, neat, real intellectual went to Officer pay section and really pulled them out of a hole. The decrease in flairs-ups over pay was quite noticeable. Classification output became more timely.

Oklahoma City was not as hospitable as Fresno, even before Pearl Harbor. It was a cow town with plenty of honky-tonks but no dance hall or recreation centers. Met a girl that I never did figure out. I never really got to know Marjorie; although Miller's wife would never believe that as she had seen me walking down the street with a blonde on one arm and a brunette on the other. Somehow Marjorie was able to find me when I went to town, and one time when I was in the Biltmore Hotel just relaxing. We did have fun. She lived with an aunt near downtown, but sometimes with another aunt in a hotel room. The family had just lost their farm and she kept saying that I was going to get it back for them.

One evening we were in quarters and an order was received for all flight line personnel to report to their duty stations. In a few minutes it was announced that there was a tornado in the vicinity. We went out and saw the whirling black cloud and heard what appeared to be the approach of a freight train. We attempted to go into a field just across the road; the guard on post halted us and fired a warning shot. We decided that it was better to stay on post. Of course at that point we wished that they still used broom sticks. The tornado plowed a mile strip through the southern part of Oklahoma City and we performed some guard duty. There was one church that had been picked up, turned around, and set back down on its foundation, off just a bit. Also, pigs and chickens running around, some planes came loose from moorings, but no real damage on the base.

During the scramble to establish another cadre, Captain Cochran came out of his office on a Friday and asked Sergeant Zinn if the reports to squadrons had gone out as scheduled the prior afternoon. Zinn answered that it had not. The Captain turned in a huff to go to his office. I said "Captain, they went out on the 3 o'clock run the prior day, one hour ahead of schedule." He then turned on me and asked, "Are you sure?" My answer, "Positive, Sir!" He glanced at Sergeant Peckhan sitting beside me who gave him a nod. He stomped into his office and advised Major Sinclair that the reports went out on time. Zinn was put in that cadre and I became section chief. I really believe that most of the troops believed that Zinn had really done it to himself.

The squadron had a party at the Oklahoma City Country Club and, as we returned to base, someone threw a metal tray of food out of the truck behind the one in which I was riding. A Lieutenant Simpson sure attempted to pin it on me, but at the same time told me that I was occupying a squadron staff sergeant rating that wasn't doing the squadron any good, working in headquarters. I informed Captain Cochran

who asked if I had done it and said OK when I told him I didn't. I was transferred to headquarters in a few days.

Didn't move to HQ area until we moved to Greensboro Hi-point Airport in a few weeks for summer maneuvers and staging for overseas duty. Thus became a tent mate with Travis and Cleveland, bivouacked in the woods near a deserted school building, which was used as the adjutant's office, the assistant adjutants (personnel office) was in tents nearby. A gracious dairy farmer let us shower in his milk parlor about a quarter mile north of the school house. Travis and Cleveland's mother came to visit them, and I got my two week leave prior to overseas shipment and visited the folks in Lynn.

Greensboro was more hospitable than Oklahoma City. They had a USO dance at the YMCA each Saturday night and a USO Recreation Center which was mostly a donut and coffee room. I did attend the dances and walked a girl home from the dances a few times. She introduced me to her grandmother sitting in a rocking chair. All she said was "Damnyankee" as one word and kept on rocking. I corresponded with her for most of the war. Captain Simpson also dated Louise.

This move caused us to feel the impact of reorganization and dropping the training functions and excess personnel before leaving Oklahoma City. This was particularly noticeable in the housekeeping, administrative and communications area. So radio operators as control tower operators and telephone men were attached to the Group Headquarters and Group Headquarters attached to the 84th Squadron for rations only. This was great as Sergeant Ruby was an outstanding mess sergeant. We ate well.

Perhaps the adjutant function was more volatile as strong personalities were involved. The adjutant, Sergeant Major an enlisted payroll clerk, was transferred from the 84th Squadron and we received three ex-1st sergeants. Oh well, Louis Buhler got his 1st Sergeant rating. Further, the demarcation of offices was not so clear and we had a severe skills imbalance. One of the first sergeants migrated to the commander's office and we received the message center and special orders function. Captain Cochran was a stabilizing effect in this transition, only four of us were from the personnel office, Les, Travis, Knobby Walsh and myself, and only the later two from the old (six months) Fresno office. Travis got discouraged with it all. He transferred to operations and moved his quarters into Stoop's and Goldberg's tent.

The Corps Area Headquarters was mechanizing the Morning Report which replaced the War Department Form #1 that had been designed by General Von Steuben for General George Washington at Valley Forge. It had resembled a large check book with strength by grade on the left side (back of page) and supporting remarks on the right side. The new form was typewritten and individual Army serial numbers and full name of those with effected status. Further a card report of change (IBM type) was required for each line entry; the HQ system was a Machine Records Unit (MRU); card storage and brush electronic readers. They had extensive problems even though we reported each change in two different formats. As a result Knobby Walsh got completely covered up with paper, receiving

numerous rejects each day, some of which he could not determine why it was rejected and no indication received as to why. So I started helping him and we had it running smoothly in a couple of months.

One evening Travis, me and a couple other fellows were in town when they had a mock air raid. We jumped into a cab and four girls jumped in with us. Of course the cab couldn't move before the mock air raid was over. Later we went to a night club on the south side of town, walked back sometime after hours when we should have been in camp. Stopped at a small bar en route and I went to the restroom. One of the guys came in and said that there was a whale of a fight out front with blood all over and that the police were coming in the front door. Tried to find a rear exit and finding none decided that we should just walk out through the front, which we did and didn't have any problem. Caught a ride to camp and had a hard time finding our tent in the dark; some guy kept saying "blood all over." Les didn't brook this kind of conduct and let us know about it.

The personnel shortage was filled with about 20 pilots straight out of flying school; 20 administrative officers called 90 day wonders, from Officer Training School at Miami and four WWI retirees as intelligence officers. They were just not able to fill our shortages of bombardiers, VHF/UHF or propeller specialist. We still didn't even know what VHF/UHF stood for. A few enlisted men were being trained as bombardiers.

The group designation was changed from Air Corps to Air Force. Some of the people who seemed to know thought this to be significant as there would soon be an Air Force separate from the Army. The ordinance personnel which had been attached were assigned to the separate squadrons. After a few weeks I asked Curly about the odd duty assignments of the Ordinance personnel and he said that he would send up the senior NCO and wished that I would discuss it with him. I spent a half day explaining that their function was to maintain the ammo dump, transport the ammo on dollies and tugs to the airplanes for the armors to load. That they were authorized one officer, one chief and nine enlisted men. Also the grades and MOSs authorized. He said that "no one ever told him any of this." In about a week Curly had the duty assignments in good shape and the other squadrons followed.

A complex personnel problem did arise at Greensboro of Life Insurance beneficiary in regard to camp followers. I do not claim enough wisdom to cope with this to any real degree but we did review all applications with other than aged marital status or parents as beneficiary. It was difficult to get any real fix, but did find more than one case where a female was the beneficiary on more than one application. Extensive counseling was conducted on the most obvious instances and lost some of them. Seemed apparent that the troops had not sorted them very well.

The green pilots had difficulty with the A-20s, some had not had multiple engine time and the aircraft landed hotter than their experience. Perhaps the greatest problem was mistaking the landing gear retractor handle for the flaps. Several pulled off the run-way and pulled up the landing gear. The group commander was furious each time it happened. Nevertheless, over-

seas flights started in early August by way of Westover Field, Newfoundland and England. The flights continued through September and a detachment of about 30% of the ground personnel shipped out on the *Queen Mary*. Sergeant Mack was the Chief NCO on this shipment.

One day Captain Cochran asked us how we felt about going to the European Theater. I said I was really ready to go. He asked "really" and I replied that I thought we had a job to do and might as well get on with it. The rest of us shipped out in the first part of October by rail through Washington DC, which was flooded, to Fort Dix, New Jersey. En route all you needed to get put off the train was to say "We might lose this War." A group Intelligence WWI major retread made this statement and the FBI nabbed him quickly. He had to talk for quite a while to convince them that he was on go! These guys were dressed in uniforms and attempted to mingle with the troops, but we could tell them a mile away. There were three NCOs that they took out of the group because of this attitude. It might have been that there was no choice at other times, but there was a firm attitude as to doing the correct duty.

Captain Cochran was astonished that our records were in such good shape; that we didn't have much to do at Fort Dix, when all the other administrative officers and men of the other organizations were really scrambling and burning the midnight oil to pass inspection. We had previously submitted the War Department Form 309 which was the same as the Machine Records Unit List except it included home mailing addresses, all we had to do was to delete the three dropped on the way, the one (which had extensive marriage/insurance counseling) that went AWOL and added their replacements.

When we boarded ships about half of us boarded another ship, but our personnel boarded the USS *Santa Rosa* and pulled out past the Statue of Liberty the next morning. The ship had been converted from a luxury liner to troop carrier by building bunks everywhere they could. We were lucky by being about in the middle (vertical and laterally) of the ballroom, six bunks high, then a floor, then six bunks, etc. until they reached the ceiling with just enough room to walk through at the end of the row of six and between the rows. Lucky because we were not in the hole below deck, actually there was not much difference. We had all our personal items, except one barrack bag which was in the hole; a Thompson machine gun, back pack, a barracks bag in this bunk with us. The ship anchored outside the harbor and we waited almost two days while the convoy formed. We had English rations and Chinese cooks; further the mess hall smelled so bad that some got sick; if hungry when you got in line, it didn't last as soon as you reached the smell about a hundred feet from the mess hall. Think the sausage was sawdust with a little grease stuffed in a gut, it was quite pale. Some of the troops were court-marshaled during the trip for eating their emergency rations; "K" rations packed in a water proofed box similar to a cracker jack box which contained a can of meat, cheese crackers, date bar and candy bar. There was much speculation as to where we were going, most thought England or Egypt. Had several evacuation ship exercises until we finally caught on that we probably were not going to



L to R: Capt. George Wells, Engineering Officer, 84th Squadron; Lt. Stevens, Assistant Engineering Officer, 84th Squadron. Foggia, Italy, October 1943. (Courtesy of Nightingale)

land in a harbor with docks. I didn't get sea sick, but once in these exercises I was stalled in a small passage way and vomit kept blowing into my face along with the sea spray. I did feel some nausea. We were on the water for 23 days, most of which was in a storm to evade the subs and conceal our destination. One night I was out on the second deck when the ship would keel over so much that we couldn't see the sky for the upper deck; just waves about 50 feet high. I saw a destroyer cross our bow at 200 feet and that was about as far as we could see. The next morning a rumor circulated that the captain had said "The ship tilt was 45%, had that increased to 46 he would have given the order to abandon ship. There was a couple such alerts and the destroyers seemed to rush through the convoy and drop a few depth charges on the outer edges; however, never actually saw any subs or signs thereof. We were given a little blue book to tell us how to get along with the Arabs. Such as don't bother women's veils or look them in the eyes and if a guest in their home eat what is served even if you know what it is. Tell them you speak American, not English, as they, like us, hate English. Four inch arm bands of the American Flag were worn.

One morning we saw some P-40 airplanes and could hear gun fire over the horizon so we knew that it would not be long. Landing nets were over the side and some infantry debarked into some smaller boats. We stayed on board and entered the harbor at Casablanca in the afternoon. Went past the *Gene Bart* French battle ship which was burning to the water line about 75 feet wide some 30 feet behind the bow. We could see all the way through her. They said that the French Treasury was in her stern and later towed to Florida. The resistance was light at Casablanca; however, the portion of our group who landed at Port Lyautey had to fight their way ashore, then took the Fort as the engineers were pinned down on the approach hill. Our ship docked alongside of a damage dock and we walked ashore without getting wet. There was still some sniper fire

but not extensive. Colonel Fletcher got some trucks and hauled us to Medouina Air Port about 10 miles south of the city. The water and mud was half way to our knees but we were housed in a Camel Stable. Upon awaking the next morning, a dung was about a foot from my head. The second night there was an air raid of a couple planes in Casablanca and they caught one in the search lights; he dived and got away. I said something like, I could have got him with a Springfield rifle" and Captain Cochran was concerned about my criticism of the antiaircraft gunners. We put down landing mats which was just pieces of sheet metal hinged with about 2" holes in them, sure did make a noise when A-20 arrived from England. Only one crew was lost in the crossing even though there were several very green crews. The advanced echelon who had crossed on the *Queen Mary* also joined us here. Les and I made friends with a French pilot by the name of Micelle Trabone, and he said that the French army had been sold out by their Officer Corps so they couldn't tell who was who in the Maginot Line. Further, that there had been a French general at Casablanca who was favorable to America and had kept telling them that the Americans would come. When we did come, the Gerries forced him to take off in an old P-36 and they never heard from him. Les, having been a history teacher, made this association more rewarding. The restrooms were a flush type but were similar to the floor of a shower stall with raised footsteps rather than a stool. The group commander held a complete group meeting and told the officers, "These NCOs have taught you all they know, now I want you take control of this organization." It never really happened on the ground.

In November we flew in a shot up C-47 to Youks-les-Bains, Algeria. It was cold and the plane was well ventilated with Flak holes. We jumped out of the plane as soon as it stopped rolling and the pilot started kicking the cargo out on the ground saying, "The sooner I can get out of here, the better I like it." We dug in on a hillside some 600 yards from the runway. Some

Arabs stood on top of the hill and kept saying snakes but we didn't mind. Our first air raid was at dusk, about three Stukas; it felt like 20 so we dug a little deeper. We relieved the 15th Bomb Group which left by truck with so many in a truck that it didn't look like they could sit down. Some of our troops were laughing and joking around and one of theirs said "Go ahead and laugh, you won't feel like it this time tomorrow." The next morning we had breakfast with the 86th Squadron and a visit by a couple of ME-109s, so we dug a little deeper. Captain Cochran asked Colonel Fletcher (Gp Opn) where we should set up. He replied "just anywhere, it is all trial and error." We found a room, dug into the top of a hill near the end of the runway, which had been dug about 14x14 feet and 9 feet deep, with dug-in steps no less. It even had a tent over it, so this became our personnel office. I set up in the far corner with Cochran facing the door on my left and Poutre's desk facing him. Les, Thayer and Ykema in the other corner. Les, Thayer, Adams and I found a lesser room about 200 yards away, dug about 15x6 feet and three feet deep with a trench entrance and covered with a French tent, so this became our quarters. Since this was some 500 yards from the 84th Mess, it did not work out so bad. The 15th Group left us quite a bit of equipment, a few DB-7s (English version of A-20) and one P-38. The DB-7's were the old ones we had turned in when we got our new A-20s in Fresno. Captain Patterson flew the P-38 as cover for the field some, but of course it would not stay up long. He was sure a hot-shot pilot, felt sure that he had not been checked out.

The 85th and 97th was on Thelepte Airfield, Tunisia about 12 miles East of Youks, there were several renegade P-40s then commanded by a Colonel Philip Cockrane (no relation to our captain) who was somewhat of a renegade. It was reported that the Cartoon Flip Corkin was modeled after him. Our Colonel Terrell outranked him. However, think that there was some friction as regards tactics. Cockrane's people would go set on a road until they saw the Gerries coming and then go back to the field, sometimes requesting the A-20s accompany them on the mission and sometimes not. Military Intelligence was almost nonexistent which is to say we gathered our own; even less communication with ground troops. A kind of do it yourself war. The Gerry intelligence must have been excellent. Axis Sally was on the radio each evening with Great Band music, calling some of our troops by name, even some of their girlfriend's names. Saying they visited us for breakfast the next morning and that the girls were having a grand time. Sure enough the MEs and Focke Wolf's would be over next morning. One such morning I didn't hear any alarm as I was squatting on the ground eating breakfast (no table or box) and saw the dust and gravel splashing in rows. Looking up everyone was gone and saw an ME pilot grinning, so knew it was too late to evade him but also that they usually traveled in flight of two or three. So I hi-gear'd into a dive into a trench, landing on Sergeant Mazenoff, taking so much dirt with me that they thought a bomb had dropped nearby. Of course there was no official alarm or antiaircraft guns, but usually someone would see them coming out of the sun and shout. Got a few gravel scratches on my hand and face.

These aircraft and the Stukas visited Thelepte more often as they were one valley 10 miles near to them. The Stukas were bad news, not so much their fire power or bombing, but the noise during the dive. They would roll over on their backs and seemed to let the weight of engines start them down screaming all the way and it seemed that they would never get down. I didn't accept that all that screaming came from their air brakes. It was long after the war that I learned that they had small sirens in their teardrop wheel covers. On about their second trip I fully realized that this was no game; that SOB is trying to kill me. The mixture of anger and fear seemed to just go through you like cold and was quite uncomfortable. One of the troops discovered that if we fired back rather than just taking cover that the anxiety was reduced. So we fired 45 SAB machine guns. However, I doubt that they were effective. One of our WWI vets was sure that they had his foxhole spotted, so he dug a new one every day. Thelepte was in a flat area and they could take off 12 abreast but then they would wait about five minutes for the dust to settle. Youks was an International Airfield, had some Ausies, English, South African, French Indian Ghurkas and the 99th Fighter Group of Black Americans. It was kind of pitiful for P-38 and 40s to go against the MEs and Focke Wolf's but the 99th had P-39s. I don't intend to bad mouth them, but what with the lack of support I don't think they ever got a full squadron mission off, even with our A-20s flying fighter cover. The Ghurkas were very interesting. They were paid on the basis of how many ears they brought back from their night infiltration of the enemy camps. Really terrifying the enemy by going into their camp center, killing them and taking ears. When the camp reawoke the next morning it was quite a shock. They were so black and moved with such grace that they could walk right by you in the dark. Of course African darkness is so dark you could not see your hand two inches from your face; our blackouts were really complete. They pulled night guard duty in the field sometimes and our instruction was that if you feel something fine across your throat, freeze and you better have on an American or English helmet. The something fine would be a knife and then they would feel the helmet, if not the right one they would have another set of ears. These troops are taught to be warriors at a very young age and considered the most honorable profession attainable. I had heard the ears story so I went over one morning and saw them cash in their ears, also eating raw meat and brown bread.

One morning I saw a stub nosed plane sitting on the end of the runway and asked what it was, someone told me that it was an English Beaufort night fighter. Put it in the morning report as Bull fighter, well you know that these English don't speak American. They explained that it was equipped with radar so that it could see at night using very high frequencies. So I found out what VHF was that I had been listed to operate and repair. Sure enough it took off just after dusk and patrolled the field. I watched and it was pitch black dark when Gerry came over, I saw a couple blasts of tracers and Gerry exploded.

When the antiaircraft arrived, they set up around the field; they didn't know so they opened

up when Gerry came over outlining the field for him. Of course he pasted us but good. So they moved them about five miles away, surrounding an empty field, that night when they opened up. Gerry pasted the empty field but good.

We got our first mail about a week before Christmas. It looked like it had been around the world a couple of times. Some packages and letters for Gene Raymond from Jeannette Macdonald. He was in a 97th Bomb Group and since we had a 97th Squadron, thus an error.

After a couple months of eating English rations and hard tack, further no administrative contact from our headquarters, I became a bit anxious about our reporting and support operations or official contact with the outside world. Poutre wasn't particularly interested in reports and Captain Cochran did not think them too important at that time. I had been accustomed with some kind of gripe from headquarters about due dates or rejects for some time. They finally said that the 2nd Corps Headquarters was in the mountains between our airfields, that I could take a jeep and see what I could find out. When I arrived at a guard post he said, "Did you just come up that little road." When I said yes, "You couldn't have as the Gerry have cut that road." Told him that I hadn't seen any. He further told me that he didn't think that I should go into the headquarter tent but I did, and they didn't know even as much as we did about logistics. Upon leaving the same guard told me that I should not go down that road, but there just wasn't any other way out, so I drove back to the field without incident. You see, I had not yet met Stoop Johnson, a supply sergeant's supply sergeant; he had the basic supply of housekeeping worked out to some degree with an outfit at Tebessa, further, that there were some miles north of them.

We lost our first crew which exploded just off the other end of the runway as they banked to form the formation. It was the crew that I had known best; as it was from the 86th Squadron. Captain Simpson, who had also dated Louise, Sergeant Glenn was the bombardier and Daily was gunner. Daily was the guy that went to Los Angeles with me on pass away back in Fresno. They were carrying English bombs which didn't fit our bomb shackles, so the bombs were armed before take-off. The next morning Curly called me to see how to mark their status and I told him "Killed in action."

When I forwarded the reports to the Captain for signature, he directed that they should be marked as "Missing in Action" until the medics report their status even though we had seen it happen and no one could possibly live through it. So Curly had to re-do his report.

One day General Eisenhower visited our area, our driver drove his Cadillac. He inspected our mess hall and asked Sergeant Ruby, "How is the bread?" The sergeant said that we hadn't seen any for about eight weeks. The general turned to his aid and said, "See that these men get bread." Sure enough, the next morning a couple C-47s came in with nothing but bread. We shared this with the 2nd Corps so it didn't last long, but somehow the hard tack wasn't so bad as it had been before.

A couple of weeks later we were about to retire when ordered to load a truck with our personal items, office files and equipment. Not to



L to R: Damen, Collins, Nightingale, Walker. 1944. (Courtesy of George Nightingale)

talk or smoke cigarettes, our detachment of electronics and propeller specialist and administrative personnel were to retreat to the west with the old song and dance that we were too valuable to risk losing. After some 40 miles we pulled into a muddy field near Canrobert Algeria and our major slid out of a truck cab, having some difficulty standing and said "Sergeant Mack spread out and go to bed." Sergeant Mack said "just me, Major."

After we were there a couple days I found it impossible to report personnel status with any reasonable timeliness, so I took a jeep and returned to Youks for a day. Which proved to be our most active day in North Africa. Many missions were flown starting with a big all four squadrons 12 planes each; the bomb run was off the mountain peaks at the passes, dropping through fog cover on Gerry's convoy in the valley at Thelapte. Then individual sorties against individual tanks, some within sight of our field. This was a wheel's up, bay doors open, bombs away, go for another load operation. A Presidential Citation was received for this day's operations. Stoop made contact with supply at Constantine so our rations were much better, further this was our first issue of a wine that we called purple death. It was purple and made your teeth purple. There was a detachment of 25 Englishmen upon a hill so I went up to ask them to eat with us. The sergeant told me that I shouldn't go into the commander's tent. I did anyway. Upon entering the captain was sitting at his desk staring at a .45 pistol laying on the desk. I told him that we had been eating their rations for sometime so we would like to return the favor; that we would let Roosevelt and Churchill straighten out the reimbursement after the end of the war. They never accepted our invitation but when they pulled out in a couple weeks, the captain stopped his convoy at our office tent. Came in and said that "I would never know how much my visit had meant to him."

One day an Arab sheik came riding into

camp with the full flowing robes and riding habit tassels just like in the movies. Said some of our people had run over his cow and he wanted reimbursement. Poutre could speak French so he told him that we could not be responsible for his livestock in a combat zone. Of course it was questionable whether or not we really were in such a zone. The Arab explained that he was not talking about loose on the road or the like, rather the troops had opened his gate and run down the cow. He even knew that it was Stoop and his bunch. We had been having fresh beef so we paid him. Leo asked him about his life and he explained that he had an English, a French and an Arab beauty for wives. That he owned several acres of land in the foot hills. Stoop pulled another deal here; he traded an A-20 for fresh eggs; the Arab picked out which plane he wanted and set under the wing each day after bringing a basket of eggs. He moved closer to the fuselage each day; he had it measured off so that when he reached the fuselage the plane was his; with which he wanted to fight the French later. He got up to inside the engine opening before we moved, did not hear anymore about transaction. Most transactions were mattress covers or smaller items for eggs which we fried on the potbellied stove in our tents at night. These stoves were made to heat with wood or coal put through the top cover; we had no wood or coal so we piped (tubing from wrecked aircraft) 100 octane from a can mounted outside the tent. Sometimes we would get too much gasoline at one time and blow the lid off.

The rear echelon which we had left at Casablanca arrived by rail (40 to 8) while we were at Canrobert, must have been a rough trip because they looked rougher than we did. Knobby was especially disgruntled about being left behind.

After the Kasserine Pass battle the front moved north, we moved to Souk Arius and Souk-el-Arba. Les tells that while I slept in a side ditch at Souk-el-Arba, a convoy of tanks passed on a

hard surface road without waking me. We found that we really were not alone in this vast continent, much more organized! However, we still supported the English 8th Army as there was no real tactical communications with American ground troops. Had a couple English officers and five or six enlisted with us as liaison. Didn't hear anymore about the renegade P-40 outfit but that his pilots had to report back to their assigned groups. AP-51 moved in to our field commanded by Colonel Archie Knight, who was from Fountain City. I helped his Morning Report NCO, Ernie Pyle visited us and wrote a short piece. Stoop and he exchanged letters about the common theory that bathing once a month was adequate. We had been getting the *Stars & Stripes* newspaper for a few weeks.

I heard someone halting someone and a burst of machine gun fire; an armament sergeant (an ex-marine) who had served in Nicaragua in early 30s had caught an Arab stealing, and didn't stop when halted so the guy shot him dead. These Arabs didn't really see anything wrong with stealing, but getting caught is entirely a different matter. They had lost respect for him and hauled him back to town in a wheelbarrow. Just as they hauled a local prostitute back to town after her days work. I never knew who her customers were but there must have been several.

At Souk-el-Arba I first became aware that we had some psycho-neurotic personnel, rather that there was a name for it. We received some reports from hospitals, in some cases to return the psychos to the United States. We had a fly over that dropped the first bombs that the rear echelon had encountered. The chief medical NCO got a bad case and they took him to the hospital that night. He had fought a good verbal fight for sometime. He went almost direct to the United States and was commissioned major within a year; he did know his medics.

A message was received from Commanding General Cannon "Send five heroes, three officers and two EMs to tour United States factories." Our commander's reply "Don't have any heroes." Response, "Make five each to have Air Medal with cluster; officers to have Distinguished Flying Cross, one with cluster the other two with Silver Stars, enlisted men to have Silver Stars. Recommendations will accompany these personnel to our headquarters NLT Friday the 11th. Purple Hearts will be awarded where appropriate." Several of our office, Operations and Intelligence burned midnight oil to dream up and write these recommendations. Those five guys really deserved their awards; we just had not had time to even think about it let alone time to write. I was able to avoid this task. At the time I thought it to be a farce, even though the UAW and coal miners were still striking.

Captured troops marched by in an endless string. Our primary mission from Souk-el-Arba was Long Stop Hill and Medjez-el-Bab, we passed through these areas on our way to Tunis so we viewed the vast carnage of the Germans last stand in North Africa. What a mess, corpses everywhere, some hanging half way out of tank hatches. One ammo dump was quite large and had hundreds of Mauser rifles, Luger pistols and helmets. In just a few weeks any one of these items would bring five dollars each from the troops just arriving from the United States.

It was good to have a lull in the fighting and we swam in the Mediterranean Sea quite often. We drove a command car about four miles to the beach. On one occasion Carey got it going backward and it flipped over landing on its top. I was in the back seat and both Carey and Thayer came half way back and were pinned at their waists by the back of the front seat. I finally managed to get out and summon help. Spent the night in a British field hospital, returned to duty the next day even though I had a sizable laceration in the top of my head and dragged my right foot. It has improved mildly but still drag it some, not so very sure about the head; that is a joke son. Sergeant Poutre called me and asked if I wanted a Soldier's Medal for pulling Ykema out of a hole in the sea. My reply, "No, Ykema said he could have gotten out by himself." His reply, "We don't care what he says, do you want one." Again I said no even though I was aware that it paid five dollars a month. I didn't know that it also counted for five discharge points after the end of the war, didn't need them either. I knew that Ykema and a couple others could not swim so had scouted the beach some and know about the hole; when he panicked I swam to him. Thayer said he didn't know I could swim so fast." The panic went out of his face when I reached him so it was just a matter of pulling him a few feet.

We had an aged National Guard Officer with knotty knees that wore English shorts and a swagger stick, which at that time real men didn't wear unless you were English or if you were Irish you could wear skirts. Anyway, he got the idea that we should march 15 miles up the peninsula, we did it but rode back for lunch. The English ate a graham cracker, marmalade and marched the 15 miles back. He also got the idea of a Saturday morning inspection.

This inspection led to my first eyeball to eyeball confrontation with Sergeant Major Poutre. Knobby Walsh had a World War I helmet which Charley Adams and I tried to convince him that he should just be short a helmet. This colonel decided that Knobby would be transferred to a replacement pool which exacerbated the skill, imbalance and left me with both Morning Report and Personnel Status. A lot of number crunching for one man. My position was that if Knobby must go, then three others should also go. He admitted that he just didn't have a job for two of them, but he just couldn't do that to them. So Knobby was transferred to the Repel Depot. I did train Krajar but he just didn't care for the detail. Replacements were beginning to arrive based upon the personnel status reports, as some were finishing their 50 missions and being sent to the United States for R&R. Our group commander had been transferred to higher quarters, our new commander was Colonel Green. They doubled our air crews so we were in effect one group operating as two groups. A detachment of 12th Weather Squadron was attached for Adm, Rations and quarters with a Sergeant Carroll as chief.

Shipped from Tunis on our first ride on a Landing Ship Tank (LST) to Gela Sicily and saw antiaircraft shooting down our transports over Gela Sicily, later found that it was our own guns. A Red Cross donut truck was loaded with us and the Lard barrels had not been properly secured,

so Sergeant Pfaff and I were detailed to guard until they could sent trucks back to winch the Red Cross truck out, kind of slick on the steel floor and ramp of the LST.

Sicily appeared to be the dirtiest place on earth. We kicked an empty pillbox open and the fleas formed a cloud as they flew out. Washed my hair in local water and it was sticky, worse than salt water. Saw our first P-51 as it screamed over the mountains, didn't see anymore Stukas, Focke Wolves or MEs. Hadn't seen many since Kasserine. We really had air supremacy now. Still in support of British 8th Army so we settled on an airfield south and east of Catania and Mount Edna. The so called race to Messina was a hunch of silliness. They buried the Common Wealth soldiers in mass graves with body parts sticking above the ground in an attempt to cross a river just outside Catania. I say again, anyone who can make General Patton and Field Marshall Montgomery play on the same team is a genius.

Talked with a Corporal Epstein from our communication section. He was really upset about reports of what was happening to his Jewish people and what went on at the donut shack. Of course I didn't really know anything about either one but he liked to talk about it and he was sick.

One evening there were several Italian airplanes landing on our field. The next day we heard that Italy was trying to surrender and we were not really, ready in a logistical sense. That evening they even turned on some lights for them to land by.

Our second LST ride was from Catania to Taranto, Italy to continue support for the 8th Army. Our supply lines were really stretched out. We had Spam, Vienna sausage and corn willy for breakfast, lunch and dinner. I offered to take over the mess sergeant to see if it could be improved, and told Sergeant Poutre that I felt the troops needed something fit to eat. His response was that Swig and I saw things much differently.

Operations were forming up a full group mission, four squadrons, 12 airplanes each. Lead plane flies straight over ocean forming his flight of three until he has gone far enough for all four squadrons to get off the field. He makes a 180 degree turn and flies back over the field and each flight folds behind and they came back over the field at low altitude and throttled back. In this instance the leader diverted a couple miles out as it was found just before take-off that the Italian antiaircraft was ready to shoot them out of the sky. They arrested its colonel. He still wanted to fight.

One morning Sergeant Demaris made a small error and I guess that I was a bit rough on him. Captain Cochran was then the adjutant of the 84th, came and convinced me that maybe I did get carried away. About noon I went on sick call and Lavizolla told the doc "We have another one." They diagnosed it as infectious hepatitis and malaria and took me and Epstein to a British General Hospital in Toronto. They gave me liquid quinine. The next morning the nurse advised that my friend had died. He had been sick for quite a while. Went by hospital ship to Constantine, Algeria, the US 26 General Hospital, and Sergeant Mazenoff 84 Operations was there with a bad knee. They gave me attibrin and quinine pills. Each morning the doctor would ask



Winners of the 47th Bomb Group formation flying contest, July 6, 1942. L to R: J. T. Braden, George McElhoe, John Anderson, 84th Squadron. (Courtesy of George McElhoe)

me if I wanted to go to the States or back to the outfit. My answer was always, "I don't care." One day he said we have given this man enough quinine to kill a horse" discontinue it and put him on a balanced diet with fresh vegetables. In a couple weeks I changed my reply that I wanted to go back to the outfit. So the next morning they gave us (about five guys) our uniforms, couple of blankets and a half a case of "C" rations. Took us to the train station marked Tunis on a 40 & 8 and we climbed aboard. It was cold going over the mountains. I went to the Tunis Airfield and an A-20 was sitting on the tarmac; they were on a rum run. I found the pilot and in a couple hours we were on our way. Naples was fogged in, we circled for quite a while and the pilot said we must return to Sicily as we were low on gas. He made what is called a combat approach to the Catania Field. One tank was empty, the other had a little.

When I rejoined the group at Foggia, I found that they had me marked Line of Duty undetermined. I reminded the flight surgeon that they had 30 days to determine the applicable status. Further if not line of duty I would demand a court-martial on the 31st day. They marked me line of duty so could not find out why they had me so marked except they had received a piece of paper from the hospital; so I don't think that they ever knew why I turned yellow and carried a fever as the hospital records had all reflected infectious hepatitis and malaria.

Also found that Sergeant Poutre had taken over as mess sergeant and he asked me to double (inflate) the quantity on the ration return. I replied "I would not like to do that." He said okay, he would make the ration return, that I was to advise him if the strength varied more than 10%. He said that every outfit was doing it; in a few weeks we were directed to physically count those at each meal. A big part of the problem was that we had two messes (officials and enlisted men) with about 30 in each one. There was also a directive that we were not to buy any food off the local market as they were on short rations so they court-martialed one of the lesser sergeants for

buying a pig on the local market. Most of us felt that an injustice, that the spit and polishers really learned to love the "Coma-rades-Coma-rades" "Italy-ans and I do mean Italy-ans," not Italians rather quickly.

On the first morning back Krajar came charging into the office tent waving a rejected Headquarter morning report as having used an unauthorized abbreviation of Reld for relieved instead of RLVD and wanted to know if he was correct and I had to advise him that they were. He took my word for it with some reservation, so I showed him the Army regulation which no longer listed RELD. It was our one and only reject during our time over there.

We were replacing a small pan of gasoline in the lower section of the pot belly stove for heat, after the stove cooled rather than run pipe. One time I got cold too quick and the darn thing exploded on me and caught my shirt and face on fire, so I rolled outside of the tent. Got second degree burns on my neck and chin. The colonel noticed my bandages and commented that it must have been painful and I agreed but nothing compared with what happened down in the line almost every day.

Operations received message to stand by for an important message from the general, just after a mission when a replacement pilot had salvoed his bombs on our side of the markers. The message was "congratulations, we had been trying to get that pill box for days and that pilot salvoed his complete load right on it, so we walked in."

An announcement was received that anyone of the first three grades who had been overseas one year was eligible for 90 days infantry officer training in Egypt. I was so bored that I applied, Poutre said, "You have not been out of the hospital long enough and you know that you would be right up front within a week, further that they would get more rejects of the Morning Report. I agreed that I still wanted to go. That was the last I heard about it.

In late fall we moved across the Peninsula to Vesuvius Airfield near Naples as the heavy bombers could now fly across Germany from England to Foggia Airfield and bomb both ways. Thus ended our air support for the British 8th army.

Vesuvius Airfield is on cinders from the Volcano so there was not much mud there for which we were really thankful. The mud was really bad for the foot troops and thus Naples-Foggia stall was the first we had experienced, as we had moved along pretty good since Casablanca. It had quite an effect when we couldn't move forward. Ernie Pyle put it best in his story about the dead captain coming down off the mountain, as we felt humble in the presence of such that lay there beside the road. Even though our living standard was much improved (better rations, mess tent framed, framed living peram tent and cots), it seemed a long hard winter.

Our quarters and office was close to the control tower at the end of the runway in a grape field. It was not unusual to hear some of the Italians singing operas as they worked. One day some of us climbed the mountain and looked down into the crater, the lava was red hot and bubbling. About 100 feet back from the edge the

lava was red under a couple inch crust which had cooled. The weather squadron, which had been attached to our group, moved about halfway up the mountain into a hotel that still had a staff of personnel. They invited four or five of us for dinner one evening. They had this hotel to themselves except for some counter-intelligence corps personnel which dined with us. One fellow told a little about his trip to Rome the day before. He was concerned about his family that lived there as he suspected that the Gerries knew what he was doing.

I got a rest and recreation (R&R) leave to the Isle of Capri. It sure was great as it had not been touched by the war. Ernie Pyle paid us his longest visit and Les tried to get me to talk with him as his best college friend, McClellan, lived about two doors from my grandfather in Salem, Indiana, but I didn't do it. Black Market was active and they court-marshaled one of our transport sergeants for trucking wheat over the mountains. A little red headed fellow from our mess hall must have tried to cross some of the locals as he was found floating in the Naples Harbor.

The volcano became active after we were there a couple months. So one noon our commander called the commanding general and asked to be moved as we had already lost some tents, but the General said, "That has not erupted in the last 400 years, you stay right where you are." The commander turned from the phone and said "We are moving to Copodochino Airfield, get going." We moved the whole group in about three hours and didn't lose but one aircraft. Major Clizba flew one out with no engine on the left side, it looked as if the prop would start dipping water any time as he went over the horizon, but he made it alright. Ran a 12 plane mission that evening. While at Vesuvius we bombed Mt. Casino so intently for a couple days that some of the Heavy and Medium bombs dropped through our formations. As soon as we stopped, the Gerries were right out in the line as strong as ever. Fact is, we never did take it, just bypassed and cut off supply in the spring. When the break through did come we rolled right through Rome and the people really seemed glad to see us. I drove a 6x6 through the Arch DeTriumph near the coliseum. We camped for a few days just outside Rome, then on to Grosseto Airport.

Our office at Grosseto was in a grain warehouse and we lined our tents upon a road in the back as air raids were now a thing of the past. One night the Gerries blew a dam up stream from us. I woke up to a noise of thump-thump and reaching down I found my shoes floating and hitting my foot locker. I roused the troops and some of us moved into the warehouse. From here we moved on to Bolonia. It did seem good to be rolling again. We then moved to Corsica by way of LST and had quite a storm though the thing could break into anytime as several others had done recently.

From Corsica we bombed for the Southern France landings, while there I visited Uncle Bill Ratts in Sardenia who was the group radio operator navigator and served on the plane with the group commander who had been our operations officer when we came overseas. He was with him when a projectile came through the floor and hit the commander on the left side of his face and blew his helmet off. Bill said he

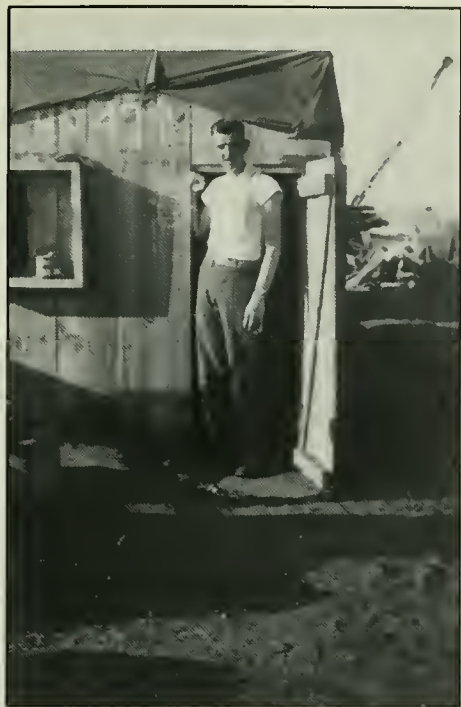
sure looked like a big man laying in the crawl way but he recovered okay. A bunch of us took a trip to the back country and stopped at a tavern which had a drink called absynthe. I had never encountered this as I later understood that it was outlawed in the States. I didn't really like it; it was chaldie and tasted like licorice. We had a nice swimming pool in a mountain stream a couple hundred yards from our tents, unfortunately Davie (Lawrence Daves) drowned in the pool and we had no idea how it happened. I went there many nights before retiring as it was quite hot. The flight surgeon had people at the end of the mess wash line to be sure we took our salt pills and attibrin. Most of mine took one loop around my stomach and up out of my mouth. These people were very unhappy with us as some bombs had fallen into a grave yard.

We went into Marseille, France a few hours after the troops landed, and it was sure lovely after seeing the mud and filth in Sicily and Italy. I didn't get to stay long as the line moved so rapidly that we transported ammo and fuel rather than bombs. I did get one short trip into town and it was more like an R&R. They said that we were needed in Northern Italy to keep some 35 divisions from escaping through the Brenner Pass to fight in Germany, so we returned to Bolonia. You should have heard the complaining of the foot troops. Didn't stay there long either as we crossed the Arno River to about 15 miles out of the Brenner Pass at a place called Verona. We were in an old field artillery camp just outside town. There was a paratroop attack reported so they needed some guards for the officers quarters in the city. I was so bored that I volunteered to stand guard. An Italian mess boy thought he would just walk through my post. I halted him, he didn't stop, so I hit him with the butt of the carbine lifting him off the ground. He reached for his pass and repeated "Bona Soldita" several times before he landed. Captain Cochran identified him as a mess boy. This is the station where we learned of the unconditional surrender of Germany. It was surprising how quiet it was, no real celebrating, I suppose because we had been expecting it for several days.

We shipped for the United States en route to Japan from Genoa, Italy. While staging there we were at ease near a POW camp and we talked with some of the prisoners, one young blond-headed guy just begged us to let him join the United States Army to fight the Japs. We also had a short arm inspection right in one of the main streets. Returned to the States via Liberty ship and landed at the Jersey Central Rail Station just back of the Statue of Liberty. Only had to walk a couple hundred yards to the train for Camp Atterbury, Indiana for a 30-day leave. The USO served fresh milk at the train station, and did it taste good! First since leaving in October 1942.

There has been much talk of the parades etc. for the returning World War II GIs but the only thing of that type I saw was one of the fire boats in the harbor had a large sign, "Welcome Home," recorded music and fire hoses throwing water 150 feet or so. But I did enjoy that!

At Camp Atterbury I answered to a roll call "Ratts" for private owned conveyance on my leave. That is the way I found out that Bill was back in the States after having flown more than



Temp HQ, 47th Bomb Group, rear echelon, on the beach at Casablanca, February 1943. (Courtesy of E. D. Hiott)

a double tour. He was quite an automobile bug. He had somehow got a pass and went to get his car. While on the 30 day leave I met your Grandmother (Ruth) through a friend (Dick Johnson) who had roomed with me in Indianapolis. We had an intense courtship then as I really believed that I was shipping to Japan.

Several said that "You have done your part." I didn't feel that way. I could not believe that "till it was over—over there." However, as I was returning to Camp Atterbury they announced that the Japs had surrendered. Here I was on the circle in really my home town when the announcement was made, getting ready to board a bus for camp, and I didn't know of anyone to celebrate with. In fact I felt loose at both ends and not really knowing what to do. So I went back to base and had a good rest. Spent some weeks at Seymour Johnston Air Force Base and the assistant adjutant really tried to get us to enlist, offered top grade of master sergeant on flying pay (1/2 base pay) and anything else he could do for us. They had a meeting in which they said they didn't expect us to salute officers but wished that we would not put them off the sidewalks. Cecil Harman, Max's brother and my former coach, was stationed there and he invited me to their home for a weekend. We went fishing off Moorehead City and caught the most fish I ever caught in one day. I was able to buy a box of Mars Bars in the PX so took them along. Sue Ann and Emma Lou ate them in one sitting so get real sick. Cecil was civil service but the other four fellows were commissioned officers; one was a second Louie, he was disturbed about fishing with an enlisted man. We finally convinced him that the war was over; however, I don't think he was really at ease.

Returned to Camp Atterbury for discharge in September. Uncle Bill and Loran's brother-in-law (Ernie Marshall) and I were discharged

together and left camp in one of Bill's cars. Didn't keep anything as I didn't need to be reminded of the experience. However, Indiana still had a law on the book, that anyone having served overseas during combat was entitled to a lifetime fishing license. I applied and received one, but they rescinded that law in a few months.

I pray that you will never have to serve in any war. If you should I hope that it would only be in a worthy war. I feel that World War II and the Revolutionary War were worthy to oppose a great evil in both cases, the rest of them are questionable, certainly not the Civil War which was craziness. I consider it a privilege and honor to have served during World War II.

Sincerely,

Grandpa Buddy

WHAT MAKES A GREAT OUTFIT GREAT?

by Colonel Marion Akers

What makes a great outfit great? In a word, people, great people make outfits great. As is commonly known, in a military organization, it's the non-coms, the non-commissioned officers, that form the backbone and the strength of the outfit. They form the major part of the unit's skeleton, they are the muscles, the nervous system. They shape the outfit, they move it, and it's through them that things get done. An outfit without good non-coms is lifeless, floundering, non-cohesive and non-productive.

The 47th Bomb Group was very fortunate. It had great non-coms and great people. When the 47th moved to Fresno, CA in late summer 1941, its limited size was made up of some of the finest of the "old timer" non-coms and other ranks. We were fortunate also to be able to interview many of the new inductees and volunteers joining up at the time and from these interviews came what we felt was the cream of the crop. They were matched with our requirements and the schooling they wanted. When the war broke out on December 7, 1941, we were very concerned that those in the schools would end up in some other outfit. We were fortunate, after their training to get nearly all of them back, well-trained and ready for the fine tuning on the job at the hands of the experienced non-coms.

Final manning of the Group was accomplished at Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma; Greensboro, North Carolina (Carolina Maneuvers) and just prior to movement overseas by the various echelons, squadrons and flights.

The importance of every man understanding, knowing and doing his job to the best of his ability is the key to getting things done, done right and done as quickly as possible. This was the spirit that prevailed in the 47th, along with the spirit of competition, competition among the various squadron elements, and among the squadrons.

Combat crews were not the only ones who had to sweat out the missions. Everyone in the outfit did, as they watched with pride and anxiety as the planes roared into the air, joined up in

THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

Anonymous

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the group
The "big wheels" and "wing" were grinding out "poop."
The bombers were parked on their hardstands with care
Waiting for ammunition soon to be there.
The fliers were nestled all snug in their beds
While visions of "milk runs" danced in their heads.
When out of the darkness there came quite a knock.
We cursed the OD and looked at the clock.
Briefing will be in two hours he said,
And if you're late you'll wish you were dead.
Time marches on and the minutes fly by
So it's out of our beds to get ready to fly.
We rushed to the mess hall as quick as a flash
And ate cold powdered eggs with hideous hash.
Then a long bumpy ride to the group briefing room
Where the "big wigs" preside and dish out our doom.
The target is told and the first six rows faint
For lo and behold Berlin, it ain't.
The "brains" had slipped up, oh my poor aching back.
We're bombing a place that throws up no flak.
So its back in the truck and off to the line.
The road is now smooth and the weather is fine.
The crew is at stations, the checklist is run.
The engines run smooth as we give em the gun,
Then suddenly the pilot wails in despair,
"Look at the tower, they just shot a flare."
We dash to the window with a heart full of dread.
The pilot was right, and the darn thing is red.
So it's back to the sack and we sweat out our fate,
For there's a practice formation at a quarter past eight.

Submitted by Morris Elder

formation and headed for the target, or, during the last 10 months of the war in Italy, watched as each individual plane took to the air and disappeared into the night's darkness heading out to seek and destroy the enemy.

Then came that period of waiting, wondering, watching the time; listening for any report from the air that would give a clue as to how things were going; or at night waiting hopefully for a call from the tower that "your" plane was inbound, with no problems; or counting the minutes until knowing that "your" plane was overdue and by now out of fuel. On the day formation missions, it was counting quickly the planes in the formation, how many, if any, were missing, what squadron, who? Everyone knew that, to a great degree, it was a matter of luck, or unluckiness, as to who did, or did not get hit or suffer damage.

On many occasions one squadron in a formation would suffer much greater damage than any other; it was then you saw the inter-squadron competition change to inter-squadron cooperation. It was every "shoulder to the wheel" from all elements of all squadrons to get those planes patched up, repaired, loaded and ready for the next mission, one from which that same plane may return within two hours after take-off badly bruised and battered and sorely in need of another good dose of TLC.

It was my honor and privilege to serve in each squadron except the 85th. But from one of my jobs for 17 months as group operations officer, I can honestly say, "No squadron of the 47th Bomb Group had to take a back seat to any other squadron." Why? Because the 47th was a great outfit made up of great people who took pride in doing their jobs to the best of their ability, admired and respected their fellow man, worried about their loved ones back home, and who loved, honored and fought proudly for their country, the United States of America.

Christmas 1944, mission was scrubbed that day and several 486th Bomb Group members headed for "their English families to spend the day with them.

TOO TALL GUNNER

by Rev. Lester "Lucky" Wollard, Chaplain

When you take young men 18 to 22 years old or so, that have been raised on farms, in small towns, or cities during the 1920s and 1930s. Boys who watched the development of the airplanes, and who were fascinated by the new thing in the air, "airplanes." Then suddenly "Pearl Harbor, war, draft, enlistments by the tens of thousands." Many of those young boys or men found their way into the United States Army Air Corps, and close up and hands on real "Airplanes." You probably can well imagine how thrilling and exciting this must have been for those men. It was easy for many of these young men to be in love with flying. So much so that in a short time, it became the most important function of their lives. Nothing we the aerial gunners could think of would compare to flying. I became an aerial gunner by a fluke of sorts.

Enlisted in December 1941, basic training at Sheppard Field, Texas. Assigned to the 47th Bomb Group, Fresno, California, but had a bit



97th Bomb Squadron gunners based in Italy, 1943. Standing L to R: R. A. Love (Pennsylvania), W. L. Richter (Nebraska), G. D. Stallings (Kentucky), E. G. Montie (Michigan). Sitting L to R: Earl D. Hiller (Oklahoma), E. Argentine (Ohio), Cliff Damro (Wisconsin). All staff sergeants and tent mates. (Courtesy of Earl Hiller)

of flu on arrival and put into hospital. Two days later, discharged and reported to 84th Squadron's first sergeant. All the other men that came from basic had been assigned jobs. Cooks, transportation, clerks, communication, etc. The first sergeant got my name and asked what was I? "What was I?" I asked. "Yes, what are your duties?" "A gunner" I said, "OK," he said, "report to Sergeant Hurley at some building." So I was a gunner, and learned the guns, the planes, and soon was flying. And I was in love with airplanes, and not only me but all the gunners were just as much in love, and flying now was our lives. Everything revolved around flying. Gunnery schools were starting and soon we were expected to attend those schools.

There were certain requirements to qualify one for flying. You had to be fit; you had to be in very good health and have good eyesight; and a gunner could not be taller than 5' 10." In the 84th Squadron in early April 1942, we had among the gunners a tall thin young man who was just about six foot tall. His name is Marshall White, and by Air Corps limitations was too tall to be a gunner. Now remember we all were in love with flying. It was now our lives.

Physical exam time, and all gunners went in mass to the medical building for the testing and exams. There must have been about 17 to 20 gunners in this group to be examined. I can't remember all the gunners names, but in the group was myself Lucky Wollard, Bob Stedman, Stanley Wood, Jack Botts, Bill Krause, and others plus this tall thin kid named Marshall White. Well friends, Marshall was very sure he would be rejected because of his near six foot height, and all through the testing poor Marshall kept up the sad countenance and kept saying, "They're gonna reject me, I'll never pass, I'm over five foot ten, they're gonna wash me out, I'm over five foot ten." He was so sad, and all of us felt very sorry about it because we all loved

to fly, and to be denied flying was heart-breaking.

We had gone through most of the testing of teeth, eyes, balance, etc, and we all were in this one large room where a doctor was to weigh and measure us. Oh, Oh, poor Marshall. He just knew this was it, and he lamented how they would never pass him. He looked like he wanted to cry, but was too old or proud. Many of us were saying, "Oh you will make it Marshall, maybe." One by one we stepped up to the scale to be weighed, and the vertical bar in the back would slide up, and a horizontal bar would be brought down on top of your head for your height. Marshall's turn came and a very sad thin young man slowly stepped onto the scale, but his stance was not the same as ours. He was very loose, and slumped down. It was a very sad thing to see, and our hearts went out to him, he was well over five foot ten."

The doctor looked at the scale, and started to bring the bar down on his head, but he stopped, stepped back a step, looked at Marshall all slumped down, and said, "Stand up soldier." Marshall straightened up some, but not much. The doctor appeared to be somewhat annoyed with this crooked looking GI, and loudly snapped, "I said straighten up soldier, stand up straight." Marshall looked so sad, as he knew this was it, but as a good soldier he stood to his full height. The doctor brought the bar down on Marshall's head so sharply it made Marshall White flinch. "Wham," the doctor looked at the bar, and barked out, "Five foot ten." Marshall's eyes popped open, and we all were speechless, especially Marshall White, and as the doctor turned away, we heard him say, almost under his breath, "I could go to hell for lying."

The room was suddenly full of very happy smiling and even laughing aerial gunners. The doctor was gone and all those nearly undressed

young men were exuberant. "Marshall made it, he made it, he's not rejected, not washed out." We were so happy for him.

Staff Sergeant Marshall White was a good gunner and served his country well. He flew on 56 combat missions against the enemy. Was rotated home and onto other flying duties. Most of those other gunners taking their physicals that day made it through and came home, some did not. Gunner Welch, Charlie Cantor, Simmons, Jack Elliott and several others are still over there and are still eternally young soldiers.

Me, Lucky Wollard, well I only did a few missions, six, and was rejected because of being "color blind," and wound up in headquarters squadron. I became the group weather clerk by another fluke of luck. We had some weather men "attached" to the 47th for a short time, serving under our group weather officer Captain Walter Snyder. I visited the weather tent a few times, and mentioned to them that I had studied some meteorology in school. When the attached weather men were sent off, they told Snyder about me, so Captain Snyder asked me if I would like to be his weather clerk. Wow! I sure would, cause I loved weather almost as much as flying. Under Walt Snyder's excellent tutoring and training, I did become a qualified weather clerk, and later was the 47th Bomb Group Weather Sergeant. The only one, in fact that was actually part of the 47th Group. We had others, but they were assigned from a weather pool, for short periods of time.

The gunners of the 84th Squadron all earned and received Air Medals and more, but poor old Lucky never got his Air Medal. But you know what? Those 84th gunners awarded me a special Air Medal in 1985. I am so very proud of my Air Medal, because it was awarded in love by my gunners, and I'd like to share with you how the award read.

"Dear Lucky: On behalf of the aerial gunners of the 84th Squadron. This Air Medal is hereby awarded to you for your meritorious weather predictions. Your ability to con your way on missions over enemy territory, to pray away flak and ME 109s, to take pictures, and your ability to encourage the gunners to greater heights. The fact that all of us admire you, the fact that Fred (General Fred Terrell) did not give you an Air Medal as he did to many of us, leaves the pleasure to us. We are sure you are as deserving as the rest of us."

Signed by Boh Stedman, on behalf of 84th gunners.

At the recent 1994 reunion in Washington DC, I proudly wore my very special Air Medal. It is such a treasure to me. I did not become a minister and chaplain until later in life, and I can appreciate now the special love that exists in the members of the 47th Bomb Group and their darling wives. The Lord instills His love in our hearts when we submit to him. Yes! and you gunners of the 47th, I don't think any of you are "Too Tall," I think you are "Just Right." God bless you.

FUEL LEAK

by John J. Neuer

While the Group was stationed in Corsica during the summer of 1944, our Group Gunnery Officer, Captain "Pinky" Arnold, decided to try and produce some homemade brandy.

After scrounging the necessary parts from the Service Squadron, Pinky constructed a rudimentary still. Using some of the local Corsican wine as the base material, he carried out the redistillation necessary to produce brandy. After several false starts, the still did produce something that by a considerable stretch of the definition could be called brandy. At the time the

Group moved to Southern France, there was still a Jerry can of the brandy left.

When the time came to move to France, Colonel Green, the Group Commander; Lieutenant Colonel Akers, the Group Operations Officer; and several others of us from Headquarters, including Captain Arnold and his Jerry can of the infamous brandy, climbed into the Group's B-25 for the trip. We encountered considerable rough air during the flight and some of the home-made brandy sloshed out of the Jerry can.

After Lieutenant Colonel Akers landed the B-25 at our new airfield at Salon en Provence and parked, Colonel Green climbed out of the plane and turned to Lieutenant Colonel Akers and said: "Ake, be sure and have this airplane checked over thoroughly. There's one hell of a fuel leak in it somewhere."

Somehow, those of us who knew only too well that Pinky's brandy was the source of the "fuel leak" managed to keep a straight face until Colonel Green was out of earshot. The "fuel leak" was stopped by the crew chief with a wet rag and some elbow grease.

Fortunately, real brandy was available in France; and, after the Group returned to Italy, American whiskey began to be issued, so that no more "fuel leaks" occurred.

GUNNER'S LAST

by Marshall White, 84th Sqdn., 47th BG

The mission of July 3, 1943, was to bomb the airdrome at Seriaeca, Sicily. One gunner named William C. Simon (of Melington, Maryland) was so restless he tried to give all his belongings away, saying this was a mission from which he would not return. No one would accept his possessions. They said, "Heck, we'd just have to give them back tonight." He was the top gunner off the left wing of the lead plane. I was the top gunner off the lead plane's right wing. As I observed, it looked as though they took a direct hit from a German 88 antiaircraft gun. Both wing tanks caught fire. I saw Simon trying to store his gun so he could close the hatch, but it was too hot. He then dropped from sight. For years I thought the pilot, Louis J. D'Agostino (of New Hartford, NY) had perished also. But I heard later he had bailed out and was taken prisoner.

A RINGSIDE SEAT FOR A SHOW OF A LIFETIME

by Colonel Marion Akers

When the 47th moved to Vesuvius Airfield, January 11, 1944, Mount Vesuvius was spewing its characteristic plume of white "smoke" with occasional periods when the smoke subsided almost entirely. A similar erratic behavior was noted in the distant thunder, like rumbles from within. Our airfield, hewn from olive groves and vineyards was nestled up to the easterly slope of the mountain.

Since being close neighbors with a volcano was new to us, it seemed a good idea to learn what we could about it. With an interpreter and one of our weather personnel, two of us from Group Operations journeyed up to an Italian Observatory well up on the Naples side (north-



Coale, Ritchie, and prepare a holiday surprise for the German leadership. (Courtesy of Archie Mull)

west) of Vesuvius to learn what we might expect from this puzzling neighbor. This observatory had been in place for many years and had vast quantities of data regarding the mountain and its activities. We were assured by the scientists that these actions by the mountain were quite normal for it during its "quiet time." It may flare up from time to time with increased smoking and rumblings but, "No worry," their predictions were that Mount Vesuvius would not erupt again for many years. We returned to base feeling greatly relieved, but still kept a leery eye on our strange neighbor that kept rumbling and belching white smoke from its snow-capped top.

The rumblings and smoke had been increasing and had become quite intense in the past few days and seemed to be even worse this rainy, stormy day of March 21, 1944.

Late that afternoon, as the skies began to clear, a tremendous explosion jolted us in the Group Operations trailer, as we rushed out to look, there was no doubt what had happened. Mount Vesuvius had blown its top. From where we stood it was a good two to three miles, direct line of sight to the top of the mountain. The boiling, billowing clouds of dust, ashes and debris were already thousands of feet in the air. We could see huge pieces of debris being blown skyward by the tremendous forces of the eruption, many of these pieces appeared to our eyes, at that distance, to be as large as a jeep or small vehicle. We had trouble imagining the actual size of these chunks. The potential danger to our airfield and everyone and everything on it was abundantly clear.

Group Operations personnel activated a plan to evacuate the field within two hours. (There were no airfields with night lighting facilities and we had, at best, two and a half hours till darkness). Word was passed up the line, approvals obtained and Capodochino Airfield at Naples selected as the site to which we would move if need be. Weather personnel were to get the best possible reading on forecast winds aloft for the next 18 hours. I immediately took off in a P-40 we had assigned to the Group and climbed as fast as it could climb to 17,000 feet and was nowhere near the top of the billowing clouds. Circling around Vesuvius, I could see the northwesterly winds were carrying the clouds, dust, ashes and debris to the south of our airfield, but a shift of the winds to a more westerly direction overnight would put us under the fallout. Upon landing, weather advised that winds "should" stay pretty much from the northwest overnight, but it wasn't too certain. We evacuated. All flyable airplanes were at Capodochino before dark, and all other personnel were on their way.

The next morning we took a check on Vesuvius Airfield. The southern part of the field was covered with about a half inch of lava dust, ash and debris. Pompeii Airfield, to the south of us a few miles did not evacuate. They were covered with several inches of dust and fallout debris, their airplanes were extensively damaged, tents were ripped and shredded and many personnel were injured and hospitalized by falling lava stones, ash and other debris from the 20-25,000 foot high clouds.

We moved back to Vesuvius Airfield on April 25, 1944, after the mountain had calmed from its daytime eruptions and its awesome, yet

spectacular, nightly shows of glowing red skies from streams of fiery molten lava fed intermittently by convulsive and thunderous eruptions.

A trip up the mountainside to a small village in the path of a lava flow leaves you with a feeling of utter helplessness. The heat keeps you from approaching too close to the wall of lava, the face of which is cooled and partially solidified by exposure to the air, then crumbled and pushed forward by the molten lava behind it. It approaches a building, piling up against it with ever increasing pressure, eventually crushing it like a tremendous monster squeezing its helpless victim, then it moves on to the next thing in its path.

The eruptions of Mount Vesuvius and all the spectacular and awesome sights that went with it is something that only a few people in the world have had the opportunity to see in person up close. We in the 47th were fortunate to see it first hand and safely. None of us were injured from it, but it was certain to leave with each of us, a lasting impression of the unimaginable forces of nature and the inability of mankind to control them. We had a ringside seat for what was truly one of the greatest shows on earth.

USAAC SERVICE, 1941-1945

by George W. Wells

I graduated from the University of Florida in 1939 with a degree in mechanical engineering. Before that I attended George Washington University at night while working at the National Bureau of Standards as a laboratory assistant in the Metallurgical Division. After graduation I was employed by the Air Corps with assignment to the Materials Laboratory to perform materials testing on aircraft components. Then on the basis of a civil service examination, I was selected to work as a junior mechanical engineer at the aircraft power plant laboratory where aircraft engine tests were conducted both on the ground and during airplane flights.

April 3, 1941: My induction into the Air Corps as a flying cadet with specialization of engineering office took place at Fort Thomas, Kentucky. With four other cadets from the Dayton, Ohio area, we were assigned to the Cadet Corps at New York University located in the Bronx, New York City to receive aeronautical engineering training. About 40 other cadets with engineering degrees were in the cadet class. This training included courses in aerodynamics, aircraft structure, power plants, instruments and aircraft design. In July 1941, the cadet class was transferred to the Aircraft Technical School at Rantoul, Illinois to receive additional training in aircraft maintenance procedures. While the cadet class was on the train going from Chanute Field, Illinois to Dayton, Ohio, for on hands experience with various Air Corps tactical airplanes, news was received on the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941.

December 13, 1941: Initial field assignment was made to Charlotte, NC; however, upon arriving at Charlotte new orders were received reassigning to the 47th Bomb Group, 85th Squadron at a temporary location at the Municipal Airport, Sacramento, California. The squadron enjoyed a scrumptious Christmas meal at the invi-

tation of a Sacramento citizen organization. This was a welcomed relief from living in tents and eating canned food. The squadron rejoined the 47th Bomb Group at Hammer Field, Fresno, California on December 28, 1941.

December 28, 1941-February 1, 1942: Assignment was made to the 84th Bomb Squadron with position as aircraft engineering officer with rank of second lieutenant. Captain Fletcher, squadron commander, would later become group commander of a Martin B-26 outfit based in Sardinia. Lieutenant Akers introduced me to a Douglas B-18 used for training before the Douglas DB-7 and A-20 light twin engine bombers arrived. DB-7 was a version of the A-20 to be delivered to the British RAF. After Pearl Harbor, a number of the DB-7 were delivered to the 47th Bomb Group.

A British version of the B-24 four engine heavy bombers, the LB-30, was being operated by the 47th. Upon the end of a search mission over the Pacific looking presumably for Japanese submarines, the LB-30 was unable to lower its landing gear. The crew was instructed to put the airplane on automatic pilot and head the plane west over the Pacific. Before leaving land the crew were to desert the plane using their parachutes. At that time the Air Corps provided crew members with either a 24 foot or 27 foot diameter parachute depending upon the weight of the crew member. Lieutenant Carter suffered a broken leg during his high velocity landing.

Captain Fletcher was a tall, good looking, energetic squadron commander who had at one time been a star swimmer on the United States Olympic team. The date for departure to Oklahoma City had been set. Captain Fletcher decided there was a need for large wooden boxes or crates to ship our supplies, consisting largely of aircraft spare parts and clothing. I was ordered to meet this need. To obtain the needed lumber and hardware from local dealers, I was introduced to the complexities of federal procurement requiring numerous forms and competitive bidding.

The pilots and gunners ferried the A-20 fleet to Will Rogers airport in Oklahoma City. The ground personnel boarded a troop train headed east. Troop trains in abundance were headed west to supply fighting personnel for the Pacific War. Our troop train required about six days to travel the 1,500 miles to Oklahoma City. The kitchen and mess hall occupied a box car. Luckily I had purchased the book, *Anna Karenina*, which took about six days to read.

February 1, 1932-July 12, 1942: The four squadrons of the 47th were engaged in extensive training during the five months in Oklahoma City. The earlier versions of the Douglas A-20 airplanes were equipped with individual exhaust stacks for each of the cylinders on the Wright R-2500 engines. Due to bad design the frequent detachment of the stacks permitting exhaust flames to discharge within the engine nacelles seriously hampered the tactical training schedule. The runways were cleaned frequently to remove exhaust stacks ejected from the planes. Lieutenant Jensen devised a modification that reduced the stack failures. Later Douglas changed the design.

Captain Smith, operations officer of the 84th Squadron, belly landed a A-20 on an open

field after take-off without injury or extensive damage to the airplane. The accident was caused by the ailerons freeze up and inability of the pilot to lower or raise the wings in a normal manner. Investigations disclosed that a surface control lock located on the control wheel pedestal had malfunctioned. A temporary fix was devised and installed on all group airplanes.

Colonel Ford, the base commander, was assigned a single engine high wing monoplane similar to a Stinson equipped with a 450 horsepower radial engine. Group people did not have a particularly good feeling towards base people for some reason. Hilarity reigned when Colonel Ford during taxing in a strong Oklahoma wind lost control and his airplane flipped over on its back.

Meetings were held periodically in the base theater. At one of these meetings, Colonel Ed Rickenbacker just returned from the Pacific Theater after his lengthy time spent on a life raft spoke about his war activities in the Pacific.

Two of the A-20s collided during a formation exercise and several airmen were killed. A memorial service was held in the base church.

Officers were required when serving as Officer of the Day to take part in the base guard duties. His most important duty was to present during the inspection of the facility housing the Norden Bomb sight.

As the squadron engineering officer responsible for maintenance and safety of the 16 squadron airplanes, I was encouraged by the squadron commander to take frequent flights as a passenger. He expressed his opinion that these flights would lead to top quality maintenance of the airplanes. I accompanied Captain Smith, the operations officer, on numerous sorties at low level over the Oklahoma landscape. At times, as we passed closed to oil derricks, I would look up from the bombardiers compartment in the nose of the airplane to observe the top of the oil derrick. Later, I was informed that cables are attached to the top of the derrick at one end and to the ground at a distance from the derrick at the other end. Striking one of these cables could be a serious matter for the airplane. Fortunately, I was unaware of this arrangement at the time of my flights.

On another flight with Captain Smith, we flew to Amarillo, Texas and landed for refueling. Shortly after take-off from Amarillo, I noted that one of the two engines had been feathered. Captain Smith advised that fuel was discharging from the fuel tank filler. I noted a spray of fuel coming from the side with the feathered propeller. The first attempt at an emergency landing was aborted just prior to touchdown. The second attempt was successful but seeing the fuel spill and feathered propeller from the airplane nose did arouse some concerns. After landing we found that the fuel filler cap had not been properly secured.

Lieutenant Jensen and I shared a bedroom in the Officers Bachelors Quarters. Lieutenant Jensen had been placed in the base hospital diagnosed with trench mouth. On one of my visits a nurse asked to examine my mouth. She and a doctor then advised that I would have to enter the hospital as a patient since I was found to have trench mouth. My confinement covered the better part of a week. Subsequently I was informed



The Nancy Lee flew 110 missions. Finally knocked out when the CO flew her through Mt. Vesuvius. (Courtesy of Walter Walker)

that the Hospital Officers Club received a number of dollars per day for each officer admitted. Also, I found out that almost all people carry the trench mouth bug.

The enlisted aircraft mechanics and specialists were highly qualified from their long time careers in the Air Corps. At this time cadres were being selected for new groups. Many of these mechanics, most in the higher grades, were assigned to other outfits. At odd times overseas in the European Theater we would run into the former members of our group.

An embarrassing event happened at an open house staged for the citizens of Oklahoma City. An A-20 was located in front of the audience of several thousand civilians. The program called for the engines to be started and create a reaction from the intense engine noise and whirling propellers. The mechanic was not able to start one of the engines after intense efforts. The citizenry must not have been impressed with the readiness of the Air Corps. Later examinations disclosed that an engine ignition coil had failed at the wrong moment.

July 12, 1942-August 27, 1942: The 47th moved to Highpoint Airport near Greensboro, North Carolina to take part in field maneuvers. All the personnel were housed in tents surrounding the municipal airport.

During an A-20 preflight by the airplane crew chief, the left wing caught fire creating a display of flames and smoke. The crew chief, in the urgency to depart the airplane, failed to shut off the fuel pumps and the engine fuel shut off valve. The fire after several minutes fully enveloped the plane. The intensity of the fire increased with heavy smoke rising to a height of several hundred feet. No effort was made to put out the fire since no fire fighting equipment was on the field. Cause was attributed to excessive vibration of the fuel line between the firewall fitting and the engine driven fuel pump inlet. This vibration occurred at a certain engine RPM band. Airplanes were modified by clamping the fuel line to a fixed engine mount tube.

Riding in the airplane nose compartment enclosed by plexiglass gave me a wonderful view of the countryside. Captain Smith and I flew to Memphis, Tennessee one day acquainting me with the ups and down terrain of the Appalachian Mountains. On landing at the Municipal Airport, the airplane was taxied close to an area accessible to Memphis citizens. The A-20 provided

an interesting example of the war effort to these observers.

Group officers were entertained one evening at the Greensboro Country Club by a group of Greensboro citizens. The community showed interest in the activity at their airport. The destruction by fire of one A-20 was criticized by several citizen observers.

August 27, 1942: The ground echelon departed for Fort Dix, New Jersey preparatory to ship transport to England. Pilots and gunners went to Kansas City, Missouri to receive new A-20 airplanes for the overseas flights. On September 4, 1942, ground personnel boarded the ocean liner, *Queen Mary*, which had been converted into a troop transport. The experience of carrying two heavily loaded duffel bags up an exterior flight of stairs to reach the deck of the *Queen Mary* remains an unforgettable memory.

Officers had been issued .45 caliber pistols as side arms. While waiting to board the *Queen Mary*, group personnel were living in the standard two story barracks. One afternoon a pistol shot was heard across the first floor nearby. An officer had accidentally discharged his pistol. The only ill effect was a hole in the ceiling.

With Captain Smith I made a trip to Princeton, New Jersey. We walked around the campus observing the college activity.

On September 5, 1942, all 15,000 Armed Forces were on the top deck of the *Queen Mary* as it headed down the Hudson River past the Statue of Liberty. The British had modified the ship by such measures as installing hundreds of bunks in the swimming pool and placing bunks in a stateroom normally for two people to accommodate eight military men. Two meals were served each day. Long chow lines were necessary. The large salon extending the full width of the ship was not changed. The furniture remained the same as the time the ship was in commercial service. The trip across the Atlantic was made without escort by destroyers. Speed of the *Queen Mary* was about 30 knots which exceeded that of any German submarine. As a defensive measure the ship would abruptly change its course every five to 10 minutes causing the ship to list 10 or more degrees. Many an officer sitting in an overstuffed straight back chair would slide from one side to the other side of the ship across the salon floor. This maneuver being repeated during most of the crossing aggravated any tendency towards seasickness. I found that lying

down in the bunk was the only relief from this malady. Several weeks after our disembarking in Scotland, we learned that on the return trip of the *Queen Mary* an accompanying destroyer was sliced in half by the *Queen Mary* when the destroyer crossed to close in front of the *Queen Mary*.

September 11, 1942: The *Queen* went up the Firth of Forth to dock at Gurock Scotland. During the five day crossing from New York City to Gurock, special courses were given to all regarding the need for tight security measures. The phrase "Loose lips sink ships" was emphasized. Several of us were at the train station platform waiting to board the train taking us to Rougham Aerodrome located near Bury St. Edwards several miles north of London in the area known as East Anglia. The aerobase had been recently constructed with RAF type Nissen huts and administrative buildings. The 80 or so A-20 airplanes being ferried across the North Atlantic were delayed by the weather. Officers were issued bicycles and several RAF lorries and jeeps were available for group use. These vehicles had the steering gear on the right side to agree with the left hand traffic lanes. RAF officers would eat in the same mess with United States troops. Normal food served in great supply consisted of brussel sprouts, pork and bread pudding. A dance for the officers was sponsored by the RAF with invitations sent to the ladies of Bury St. Edmunds. Britain had been at war for three years which explained the drabness of the dresses and gowns worn by the ladies.

A visit to downtown Bury St. Edmunds at night gave one a strange, unique feeling. Strict blackout rules were enforced. On a moonless night particular care was needed as you walked along the streets to avoid a collision with a per-

son or fixed object. This firmly impressed you that you were in a war zone. Several of us borrowed a RAF car for a trip to Norfolk about 40 miles north. Upon entering the city the sounds of sirens alerted us to a possible German air raid in process. We exited the car in time to look up and see German JU88 descending below the low cloud deck. Bomb bay doors were opened and a few seconds later several bombs were released upon the city. At a distance of about a quarter of a mile from our car, we heard the bombs explode and witnessed the smoke and debris from the hits.

October 5, 1942: Transfer was made by the group to RAF Horham Air Base near Eye which was about 50 miles east of Bury St. Edmunds. This air base had not been previously occupied by an operating group. New airplane hangers, administrative buildings, Niessen huts and control tower were in place for a major aircraft operation. This type base was duplicated in other areas of East Anglia for future use by United States heavy bomber outfits.

The 47th A-20 light bombers in flights of six airplanes arrived from the overseas flight which took almost six weeks or so. A most memorable occasion to see these airplanes overhead departing from the formations to land individually at Horham. Noise from a number of 1,600 horsepower engine at low altitude stirred a deep feeling of accomplishment and patriotism at this time. All the arriving crews were debriefed about their cross Atlantic flight. Malfunctions of the airplanes were noted for the purpose of possible airplane corrections. Indications were that one of the airplanes had overflown Scotland in the direction of Norway and was considered lost.

Obtaining replacement parts for 75 air-

planes presented many difficulties. The 47th was among the first Air Corps tactical air groups arriving in the British Isles. To correct this deficiency a trip was planned to Liverpool on the west coast of England in an effort to improve the supply situation. With a sergeant driver I started in a RAF west bound direction which take us through Coventry and Birmingham before coming to Liverpool. The British had been equipped with the Douglas DB-7 airplanes which were almost the same as the A-20s. A working arrangement was reached with RAF administrators to assist in supplying the 47th with needed replacement parts.

Before the 47th arrived in England, the Air Corps had sent a detachment of a small number of A-20 airplanes to England. This outfit was commanded by a Major Keggelman. Several of his airplanes were the first American airplanes to fly over the European mainland after America entered the war. Major Fletcher invited me to go with him to confer with Major Keggelman. His airfield was about a hundred miles southwest of Eye. Major Fletcher had no problem navigating the A-20 going, but coming back he became lost and landed at non-military field. Inquiry was made of a lone civilian as to our whereabouts, then we proceeded back to Horham without incident. England as seen from the air presents very few positive landmarks that exist in the United States.

Squadron Leader Moore from South Africa was assigned by the RAF to our group to assist in obtaining supplies through British channels. He was extremely critical of the British government. This position seemed to be typical of those military people from other colonial countries such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

8th Air Force Command convened all group



Buffalo Dave, after mission to the Kasserine Pass, February 22, 1943. Both gunners had flak wounds. Last mission for this 13001. (Courtesy of Chester Taylor)

engineering officers in England at a meeting in High Wycomb about 40 miles west of London. This meeting covered operational requirements in the aircraft maintenance and supply area. While there I had my first "afternoon tea" at a close by dainty tea house with a pinkish decor. A choice of a wide assortment of sweets and cookies preceded the pouring of tea. An evening in London was topped off by the attendance of a British comedy staged at a popular theater.

December 23, 1942: Orders were received for the 47th to move to North Africa. I was assigned as a rear gunner to an A-20 piloted by Lieutenant Patterson. A flight of A-20s left Horham Air Base to fly to Penzance at the south-west tip of England. En route the weather turned bad requiring the planes to land at Oxford for an overnight stay. Christmas day in Penzance provided a surprise by the RAF mess serving ice cream for dessert. The briefing for the flight to Africa was routine in that a daily fixed time schedule and route was being followed for each days flight. As a flight of A-20s were taxiing out for take-off from Penzance, the accidental discharge of the rear firing machine guns mounted in the aft portion of each nacelle caused the death of several crew members in an adjacent plane. An unguarded electrical switch for these guns had been inadvertently hit, tripping the firing of the machine guns. This deficiency in design was corrected by a field modification.

While in England Lieutenant Martz and Captain Clizbe purchased two identical Labrador Retriever puppies. Each was about three months old and jet black. These pups found great affection from all in the group. I was inspecting Lieutenant Martz's airplane before he departed Penzance, as I placed my head through the entrance to the rear airplane compartment, Lieutenant Martz's puppy surprised me by licking my forehead. On Lieutenant Martz's flight to Africa, he was intercepted by a German JU88 off the coast of France and shot down. Major Clizbe and his puppy arrived safely in Africa. His puppy named Tarfu grew a normal size Labrador and remained the pet of the outfit.

December 27, 1942: On our flight to Africa, taking about six hours, the A-20s were accompanied by several P-39 Air Corps fighter aircraft. At the pre-departure briefings we were advised that if an emergency landing were necessary, landing in Spain was not recommended. The Spanish government would not be cordial to Allied airmen. Portugal would be the country of choice. Upon arriving off the coast of Portugal, the P-39 fighters left the formation, presumably heading eastwards.

Our first landing was at Port Lyautey. We learned that an A-20 landing before us had landed short of the runway and suffered extensive damage to the airplane. This must have been a sad event for the pilot who had nursed and flown the airplane from the United States over the North Atlantic taking over three months under trying weather conditions. The next morning our airplane was flown to Medouina Airdrome near Casablanca. The French had used this Airdrome. French light bombers similar in appearance to the A-20 were dispersed in the area. None were in condition for operation.

On New Years Eve the sound of German bombers were heard. At that time we were quar-



Captain Robinson dealing for eggs in North Africa. (Courtesy of Chester O. Taylor)

tered in French barracks in a state of disrepair. On January 5, 1943, after loading a Douglas C-47 transport with group aircraft supplies and tools, I left Medouina standing behind the pilots in the cockpit. On take-off after leaving ground effect, the airplane began to settle towards the ground. Fortunately, this condition was corrected. The airplane had been loaded without the cargo being carefully weighed. The airplane was refueled at Algiers before proceeding to our new station at Youks-les-Bains, Algiers. German forces were perhaps at that time a 100 miles east of Youks-les-Bains. The airport had no buildings or paved runways. The Atlas Mountain Chain was to the west. Living quarters had been dug in the ground and covered with available material from shipping cartons and other sources. One of the few tents used as an operations center had been bombed by the Germans killing several of the occupants. Meals were served in the open using the individual mess kits. After serving the slit trenches were used as a dining room. German fighter bombers soon found out that a fresh number of Allied bombers had arrived. The imminence of an air attack was announced by the firing of red flares. In no case when the flares were fired did the German planes attack the airdrome. In all attacks the German planes began their strafing without prior warning. Damage was not heavy as would be expected. An RAF Beaufighter was put out of commission by a nearby bomb burst.

In addition to being supplied British rations, British bombs were placed on our A-20s for low level bombing missions. One morning a British bomb exploded on an A-20 during take-off. The word got out that these bombs were extremely sensitive. Our armorers and mechanics became reluctant to load these bombs or work on airplanes already loaded for a mission. One of the airplanes requiring a tire change had been with the bombs. Before the airplane was put on jacks for the tire change, an officer was dispatched to

the airplane to be with the ground crew during this questionable situation.

General Dwight Eisenhower, with his British female driver and several of his staff, visited the 47th at Youks-les-Bains. This was several weeks before the Kasserine Pass episode. During his inspection and discussions with group members, he asked our mess sergeant about the food being supplied by the quartermaster. At that time we were eating only British rations including hard tack. The sergeant explained to General Eisenhower that the outfit did not like the hard tack and was looking forward to fresh American style bread. Within a week we were served the desired soft American bread.

Two of the four group squadrons were moved to Thelepte, Tunisia about 50 miles east towards the fighting. The other two squadrons remained at Youks-les-Bains. The Germans had started their advance towards Kasserine Pass to break the Allied line. Our A-20s were running turn around mission supporting our ground forces. Apparently the situation became tense when we could hear our tanks with their noisy engines and tractor treads rumbling westward along an adjacent road. The next day all unnecessary personnel at Youks were evacuated to the rear. My slit trench roommate was one of those leaving. He unintentionally took with him the two magazines of 45 ammunition for the Thompson machine gun I obtained in place of the standard issue 45 pistol. This was just as well as I probably would not have presented much of a challenge to a German infantry man.

March 6, 1943: Change of station was made to Canrobert, Algeria, about 125 miles northwest of Youks-les-Bains. The Germans were holding onto areas in eastern Tunisia. About lunch time several German Focke Wulf 190s strafed the field at an altitude of not more than 500 feet. Next to the mess hall, a garbage pit of about 15 feet in diameter and several feet deep had been dug. Seeking cover many of us jumped into the pit

disregarding the contents of the pit. As the bombs dropped I realized that my rear end protruded above the level of the surrounding ground. Efforts to descend further into the pit were opposed by those lying beneath me. Damage to aircraft and equipment was minor; however, an Arab and his donkey were not so fortunate. Both the Arab and his steed were killed by bomb fragments. A jurisdictional battle between French and American officials as to who had responsibility for removal of the dead bodies went on for several days. In the interim mechanics and armorers working in the area of the dead Arab complained about the odorous distraction. Finally the argument was settled to the relief of many.

April 13, 1943: While the group was located in Souk-el- Arba, Algeria, an ancient appearing Arab bathing facility provided a novel way of relaxing. Separate bathing pools of water with temperatures in one pool being normal water temperature, another being tepid and another with water almost steaming. Progressing from the lowest temperature bath to the hottest seemed to be the proper procedure.

May 29, 1943: The Germans had been forced out of North Africa and the Group moved to Soliman about 25 miles east of Tunis, Tunisia. Squadron tents were dispersed through out the olive groves. Grapes were being grown in a field next to the camp. Tactical air support was provided to the attack on Lampedusa, a small island in the Mediterranean, off shore of Tunisia. The routine of the day was changing when Churchill passed by in a motorcade. Also, a fishing trip using German hand grenades proved a quicker and more productive effort than using conventional fishing equipment. A case of about 20 enemy hand grenades had been mysteriously made available to a select number of pilots. Standing on shore close to the waters edge, an individual would take a grenade out of the storage container, pull the firing lanyard and then throw it about 60 feet into the sea. In the neighborhood of 10 seconds, a muffled sound would be followed by a vertical stream of water rising to a height of 20 feet. The dead fish would float to the top of the sea waiting to be harvested. Enough fish were gathered to feed the squadron of 150 men. One does get tired of eating Spam every day so much so that desperate measures may be taken to obtain a change in fare.

August 10, 1943: After the naval and ground troops invaded Sicily, the 47th moved to Gela, Sicily. Our group chaplain felt that his going in the bombardiers position in the nose of the A-20 on a bombing mission could improve the morale of our combat crews. After this decision was made, the chaplain happened to make his adventure when the flight was badly shot up by the German 88mm antiaircraft fire, and the plane he was in could not lower its landing gear for the return landing. I witnessed the landing with the gear up on the dirt runway. When the plane touched down on its belly, sand and gravel was thrown up in quantities that seemed to darken the sky. By the time I arrived at the plane on the end of the runway, the chaplain was just emerging through the escape hatch at the top of the nose compartment. Other than being white as a sheet, the chaplain was unharmed. Never again did he request passage on a combat mission.

August 20, 1943: The airplanes were flown to our new base at Gerbini number 10 near Catania, Sicily. Ground personnel joined the group by motor vehicle transport. This air base had been used by the German air force. Disabled Messerschmitt 109s let us examine closely their construction and design features. As I recall propellers were fabricated from wood which was a departure from our use of either aluminum or steel.

September 20, 1943: Next stop was at an improvised air base just east of Taranto, Italy. Some of us were carried by a Navy LST landing in the Italian instep close to Taranto. This was considered a break since the Navy carried a wide selection of meats, vegetables and pastries made possible by on board refrigeration.

While inspecting the A-20s on the flight line, I passed a farm house with attendant out buildings. Closer observation disclosed two burly, whiskered men working in the field. Their appearance did not fit that of the Italian we had become accustomed to seeing. Later I found out that these men were Russian prisoners of war. Apparently, the Germans had negotiated with the landowners to use these Russians as slave labor.

September 15, 1943: Move was made to Foggia, Italy north of Taranto about a hundred miles. Foggia had been heavily bombed by the Allied air forces as a visit to the downtown area showed. Hardly a building was missed and, of course, there was absolutely no evidence of habitation. The air base had been used by the Germans. Damaged airplanes and other German equipment were on the field. During the period in Foggia leave was given to the men. Many went west to Naples and others visited local Italian towns. Walking into an Italian barbershop and asking for a shave seemed a questionable act when the Italian barber commenced the shave with a straight razor. After all, he may have been an Italian fascist several months ago.

September 9, 1944: Move was made to the eastern slope of Vesuvius volcano southeast of Naples. United States engineers bulldozed the vineyards to lay a pierced steel runway. The lava enriched soil made nice wide taxi strips to the individual revetments for the A-20s. Pyramidal tents were pitched throughout the area. Each tent was equipped with a gasoline fed stove fabricated from fuel system components available from shot up airplanes. Italian winters can be uncomfortable. Once in a while these stoves would explode if improperly started early in the morning.

Vesuvius volcano started its eruption action a month or so after the group arrived. The mouth of the volcano was a distance of five miles as the crow flies from the camp area. In the evening you could sit outside your tent and marvel at the sight of blackish, greyish smoke rising to a height of two or three thousand feet. As the activity increased, red boulders would be thrown out of the volcano rising vertically with the smoke. Lightning bolts would jump around the smoke and ash discharges. One of our squadron commanders flew his A-20 during a survey flight of the active volcano too close to the action. Examination of the airplane after this flight disclosed wing and empennage leading edges discolored as if they had been sandblasted.

One morning an extremely loud explosion

was heard coming from the direction of the flight line. Upon arriving at the airplane dispersal area, we noted an airplane was completely engulfed in flames. Machine gun ammunition was being discharged by the intense fire. Our efforts were centralized to move adjacent airplanes from the fire hazards. Several armorers who had been loading the airplane with fragmentation bombs were killed immediately by the explosion. This airplane had been parked directly under high tension electrical lines serving the Naples area. Ordinance experts were called in to investigate the explosion, but gave no credence to the possibility that induced voltage from the electrical cables could trigger the bombs.

The intensity of the volcano eruption increased to the point that ash accumulated to a depth of several inches on and around the airplanes. An evacuation was made to Capodichino commercial airport on the outskirts of Naples.

March 24, 1944: Being close to the heart of Naples gave ready access to all the amusements of a big city. The officers particularly liked visiting a club overlooking Naples harbor. A large military hospital located in a modern building provided the opportunity to have needed dental repairs. Also, the lovely Army nurses would invite us to their frequent dances. One of the dances was interrupted by the wailing of air attack sirens. We witnessed the harbor being attacked by German night bombers. One of the enemy planes was caught by our search light batteries. Antiaircraft fire could be seen following the plane. The plane flew away unharmed by our fire.

Sharing the airport with the 47th was an American fighter group composed entirely with black pilots and mechanics. This group was assigned the responsibility of patrolling the Naples harbor. Frequently, one would see a pilot with his seat type parachute on walking around the airport perimeter. This was a punishment for failing to meet a performance standard.

After Rome fell to our ground forces, I went on a training flight with a pilot raised in Hawaii. Having selected the bombardiers position in the nose of the A-20, the low level flight to Rome gave me perfect visions of Italians taking their farm produce to market along a dusty road, the roof tops and activities in village squares. The dome of St. Peters and the Vatican gardens were most impressive. The next day orders came down from headquarters requiring all Allied plane to fly not less than several thousand feet over the city of Rome.

June 14, 1944: Ponte Galeria Air Base had been constructed by the Corps of Engineers close to the Tiber River about 15 miles west of Rome. Tents housing members of the squadron were pitched practically on the banks of the Tiber. The proximity to Rome gave us all many opportunities to visit the Eternal City. The hotels along Veneto Boulevard were open to the Allied forces. Being served well prepared food by waiters was a treat not experienced since leaving the States. Italian girls were eager to greet the Americans. Rome had been occupied by German troops ordered not to fraternize with Italians. Evidence from the young girls of Rome supported the fact that German soldier did not disobey orders.

An A-20 with its crew failed to return from a bombing mission. One report indicated that the

plane may have made an emergency landing in Lake Bracciano 60 miles north of Rome. I accompanied several pilots in a jeep to the Lake to find out more information about the missing plane. Our fluency with Italian was minimal, but after driving many miles around the lake making attempted pointed inquiries to the natives, the search mission was called off. No further reports about this plane were ever received.

Ostia, the ancient seaport serving Rome in the days of the Caesars, was not very far from our base on the Tiber River. A sightseeing tour was in order so several of us jumped into a jeep for this adventure. Roads to the town were not marked with signs directing to Ostia. After some confusion in taking the right road, an entrance into the town passed an Army Military Police blockade. The MP that halted our entrance informed us that the road we had just come in on was planted with German land mines. A lesson learned.

June 26, 1944: Ombrone Air Base near Grosseto was north of Rome. For a change most of the outfit was housed in stone building near the base. At this time our Douglas A-20s were being replaced with a larger and faster plane, the Douglas B-26. Operations of the group was to be done at night with single plane intrusions into enemy territory for the purpose of attaching troop concentrations and enemy transport. The planes had been painted dull black to minimize detection. A total of eight fixed forward 50 caliber machine guns with a two gun movable turret on top of the rear fuselage and a similar turret on the bottom of the rear fuselage made up the armament. An ample space bomb bay gave the plane a respectable capability. The Group Operations officer asked me to go with him on a training mission with the new plane. We left after dark and flew to an uninhabited island off the west coast of Italy. The plane was put in a shallow dive from an altitude of 2,000 feet aimed for the middle of the island. At about 1,000 feet all the guns on board were fired. Following the tracers downward, one could admire the heavy concentration of firepower. The excitement increased when the yellow trajectory of the tracer ammunition was observed to be ricocheting from the rocks on the island and passing above the level of the plane.

July 12, 1944: To support troops landing in Southern France, the 47th moved to Poretta base near Bastia, Corsica. German prisoners of war were observed near the base repairing damaged roads and bridges. Appearance of the prisoners showed that the French were not feeding the prisoners a sufficient amount. All were gaunt with no fat and thin arms and legs. Our tent camp was near a fast flowing small river. The closeness of this river encouraged many to wash their clothes using the large rocks on the shore as a wash board. An engineering clerk was drowned when he slipped and fell from a rock. Later, the information came out that he could not swim. Also, many of the A-20 gunners flying over the Mediterranean were in possible jeopardy due to their inability to swim. They were equipped with Mae West inflatable life vests but...

Fuel supply could not keep up with our advancing ground forces in Southern France. For a short time the A-26s were used to take fuel to France. Procedure was to fill the auxiliary tanks



An energetic game of cards during off-duty hours. (Courtesy of Tom Ratts)

in the bomb bay full and fly up the Rhone River Valley to Lyons, France. There this bomb bay fuel was unloaded and the planes returned to Corsica for another load.

September 5, 1944: Move was made to La Jasse Air Base near Salon, France. Salon is close to 65 miles northwest of Marseilles. A French chef was employed to add zest to the routine chow. Also, several charming French girls would serve the starved pilots in the officers mess located in a nearby converted French country home. On a side trip to Arles, we were surprised to see the French parading about 10 or more French girls with all their hair completely shorn. This was the penalty for association with German soldiers. Our visits to local bars convinced us that the French did not act cordial to the American troops.

September 20, 1944: Our air base near Follonica was on the west coast of Italy about 15 miles east of the island of Elba, Napoleon's prison before his return to France and the battle of Waterloo. The rainy season kept the planes on the ground for a long period of time. The officers were housed in a large two story stone residence with a view of the Tyrrhenian Sea. One of our planes crashed into the sea just off the coast where the residence was located. A body of one of the crew members washed ashore nearby.

December 13, 1944-January 8, 1945: A group consisting of pilots, bombardiers, armament and engineering officers, about eight all together, were assigned to the 409th Bomb Group near Paris. Purpose of the assignment was to observe their Douglas A-26 operations. The 409th had been in the European Theater for a short time. Their living standards reflected inexperience in a combat theater as indicated by unheated living quarters and administrative offices. Several of us were able to obtain reassignment to a higher echelon organization living in a French chateau with modern accommodation such as central heat and well equipped baths. Of course, higher rank officers were there in abun-

dance. The Christmas meal was something extra special. During our stay there the sirens warned about an enemy air attack. At the time I was taking a hot bath and did not see any urgency in going to the bomb shelter. This reluctance was a result many false alarms in the African and Italian theaters. A major checking on compliance with their rules insisted that I dress and proceed to the shelter. This, I did.

Heavy fog had grounded all the planes preventing support of our troops engaged in the Battle of the Bulge. The fog was so thick that you could hardly see your hand with your arm extended to your front. When the fog lifted one morning, all the planes took off on their first mission in three or four days. This was a most exciting occasion.

January 8, 1945: On my return to Grosseto Air Base, I acted as group engineering officer. By this time we were beginning to receive our complement of the Douglas A-26 night bombers. An extensive training program for maintenance personnel was begun. Buildings adjacent to the airfield were used for this purpose. Quarters and dining facilities were also located in well designed and constructed buildings.

April 16, 1945: I left Naples on the transport ship West Point arriving in New Port News, Virginia on April 29, 1945.

47TH MEN CAPTURE ENEMY SOLDIER

by Lester "Lucky" Wollard

The claim is that two men of the 47th Bomb Group, 84th Squadron were the only ones from the group ever to capture an enemy soldier. This is a true story related the best that 51 years of memory can recall.

Early to mid-May 1943, the African Campaign had come to a victorious conclusion. The 47th Bomb Group had been there with the Allied forces from day one and had actually been part of the invasion of North Africa. General Carl

Spaatz was our air commander, and Colonel Fred Terrell was our group commander. The CO of the 84th Squadron was (then) Captain Walter Hanna. Yours truly Lester "Lucky" Wollard had been an aerial gunner and for medical rejection was now part of the ground crews.

The 47th had taken a very active part of defeating the axis forces. The 47th had played a very important, but costly part in our defeating the Germans at Kasserine pass where the group was to receive the first Presidential Unit Citation.

Following the surrender of the Africa Korps, the 47th Group moved up to northern Tunisia, just east of the city of Tunis near a village named Hammenleaf. There was a very large flat plain for our aircraft, and the squadrons were dispersed along the main highway "Route De Soussse." There had been some large German and Italian supply areas right where the 47th was bivouacked, and we were constantly bothered by local people sneaking around. So it was quite important that we maintain constant "guard duty." This is when the capture of that dreadful, terrible, fearful enemy soldier took place.

Sergeant Lewis Dillon and Lucky Wollard were on the same airplane, the famous gunship, *TuTu* #9, of the 84th. It just happened that one day Lew and Lucky had to pull guard duty at the same time. They were at the main gate (a drive way coming into the area) and while on duty, one would stand at this gate, wear your tin helmet, salute, watch people come and go and try to look serious. It was dull of course and boring, but also quite necessary. Lew Dillon had his Springfield rifle, and Lucky Wollard was armed with a recovered souvenir German Mauser rifle.

It must have been around 11:00 a.m. when Lew and Lucky spot this ragged, dirty native looking character coming toward them. "Ali Ali" they both said, which is supposed to mean, "beat it, get away." Well this guy gets really close and he looks a mess, hair straggly, clothes filthy, dirty, he smells and is waving his arms and jabbering. The guards have no idea what he wants and repeat "Ali, Ali." But he jabbars louder and louder, waving his arms in the air. He is persistent and won't go away.

Lew and Lucky haven't a clue what he wants, but he's bothering them and they want him gone. Sergeant Lew Dillon about this time said, "I don't know what in the heck he's saying Lucky, but go over to the orderly tent and get Sergeant so an so, he knows a little Italian and maybe he will know what this guy is saying." Lucky goes over and brings back Sergeant so an so, and he goes up to this ragged dirty bozo, who is still very loud and still waving his arms in the air.

The sergeant talks with him for about a minute, turns to the guards, Dillon and Wollard, and says "Hey! this man is an Italian soldier and he says he's been hiding out since the fighting stopped. He is starving and wants to surrender. He's been telling you, "I surrender, please capture me."

Dillon and Wollard are dumbfounded and don't know just what to do, but within a few minutes there are several Italian American soldiers around this guy, all talking, laughing and slapping him on the back.

Lucky and Lew didn't even get to point

there guns at this enemy, but they sent him off as "our prisoner."

They watched as our men took the poor Italian to the orderly tent a few yards away, while everyone waited for Captain Hanna to tell them what to do. The 84th's First Sergeant Tommy Thompson was worried sick, and he strapped on his service 45 pistol and wouldn't even stay in the same tent. While waiting it was suddenly "chow time," and somebody handed our enemy a GI mess kit and took him to the mess tent. Wow! Oh wow! My Lord, all that food. That starving enemy soldier loaded both ends of that mess kit eating as he filled. When he got to the bread and saw it was white bread, he looked surprised. He stopped, looked back at everyone and said "You Americans even have white bread." He looked like he wanted to cry. Many of our own soldiers had some tears about this time.

A short while later our prisoner was cleaned up and outfitted with clean clothes. Captain Hanna gave the orders to send him off, but many of our 84th men pleaded with Captain Hanna to "let him stay." They said, "why can't we keep him, we'll watch him." Walter Hanna explained that he was sorry but didn't have a choice, and "besides, he's not a pet, he's a prisoner of war and has got to go."

Lew Dillon and Lucky Wollard, our two guards, later watched their prisoner leave for Tunis, standing in the back of a truck, still waving his arms, a big big smile, full belly, a bag of food (with white bread) and in clean clothes. Our guards thought that he must be about the happiest prisoner of war in all of North Africa.

This was an event; an event that Lew and Lucky tried very hard to avoid that day in North Africa. They thank God that the poor starving dirty enemy soldier was so adamant in wanting to surrender. No one ever knew what happened to him, but whatever happened afterwards had to be a lot better than hiding out and starving.

Wollard and Dillon never asked for or re-

ceived any recognition for their daring and brave, noble deed. As far as anyone knows, they are the only men of the 47th Bomb Group to have ever captured an enemy soldier. Do they deserve a medal? Sure! Why not? Do they deserve to be singled out for their alert and brave awarness and keen sense of duty? That they may have entered into possible danger to capture a desperate enemy soldier. Well he was desperate. The fact that Lew and Lucky had tried very hard to get rid of a possible nuisance doesn't really matter. What really matters is that this is a true story. An event that Tech Sergeant Lew Dillon and Sergeant Lucky Wollard will always remember, and even treasure as an event, a happening in North Africa far, far from home in May of 1943.

THE AIR WAR CAN BE PERSONAL

by James L. Wadsworth

Historians, novelists and other writers have justly chronicled that from the air crew standpoint the air war was impersonal. We attacked targets not people and even when humans were involved the distance and lack of personal contact allowed the attacker to remain reasonably detached. It was not so to those on the ground.

On arriving home in October 1945, I found a small highway tavern had become a nightly gathering place for the veterans of all services and from all theaters. One night I arrived earlier than usual and found a stranger tending bar. He was still in uniform and wearing ribbons of Silver Star, Purple Heart and Apennines Theater Badge. When I saw the 10th Mountain Division Patch I told him that I had flown in Italy at the time he was there. He became quite agitated and asked my outfit. When I said 47th Bomb Group, he vaulted the bar, hugged me, kissed me on both cheeks and started crying.

His story was one of being trapped with the



"Informal" conference at Youks Le Bains, February 1943. Standing L to R: Squadron Comanders Captain Marion J. Akers, 97th; Richard E. Horner, 86th; Walter J. Hanna, 84th; Reginald J. Clizbe, 85th; Group Operations Officer, Lt. Col. Eugene B. Fletcher. Kneeling Captain William F. Duncan, Group Logistics. (Courtesy of Marion Akers)



Planes of the 97th Squadron en route to Sicily. (Courtesy of Ted Kuhlman)

remnants of his company in a canyon with only one way out and that blocked by a superior German force. They made contact with their headquarters and shortly after were told that at certain times they were to mark the position of the enemy with phosphorus mortar fire. The Sergeant said that night air support was not expected and was thought impossible, but on marking the position of the Germans, a plane laid a string of bombs right on target, then at about 10 minute intervals other positions were marked and two more air attacks were made. Those attacks were so devastating that the company walked out of the trap with no further casualties. The sergeant said that every one of his buddies expected to die or be captured.

I knew that I had been involved in such a sortie and went home to check my diary. The dates matched. From our point of view, this is what happened.

On that particular night we were assigned to an area recon and loaded with 220 pound frags. Before we crossed the bomb line, "Pintail," which will be remembered as our radar-ground control, asked me what load I was carrying. On learning it was frags and that I had no specific target, he told me he had a priority target for me. We were briefed by radio of an infantry unit trapped ahead of the bomb line and in perilous condition. Pintail said that colored mortar was to be used to mark target positions; that he had two other planes that were to go in on five minute intervals; that we were to be #2 and to clear the area immediately because another plane would be five minutes behind. The target area was right near the backbone of the Apennines, north and a bit east of our field in Pisa. The direction of approach would have to be from the south leaving higher mountains in the pull out directions. To avoid casualties in our own people, Joseph Kaplan, bombardier, and myself decided on bombing height of 2,500 above terrain, which height he took from his maps. Very shortly we saw the phosphorus explode and within seconds (so it seemed) we saw the explosions of the first

plane over right on target. Our own markers exploded and Kaplan laid the frags in a line across the markers.

Another bombing of an impersonal target with no feelings, except satisfaction, that we had done what we were sent to do. It became very personal as the sergeant's story unfolded some six months after the actual happening. The sergeant and I became friends and I even received a letter from another of his buddies who was in the trap. The air war was not impersonal if both sides were known.

I don't know who the other two crews were, but if this is printed and the incident is remembered, I hope it gives them a feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction.

I RETURN TO THELEPTE

by Costa Chalas, 97th Bomb Squadron

Dear Friends: You may recall at the reunion of the 47th Bomb Group in Dayton last July that I promised all of you that I would go to Thelepte, Tunisia. I have just returned. I spent one week visiting all the places that we were at in 1942 and 1943.

I stayed at the Tunis Hilton for one day, then traveled to Medjez-el-Bab, Jendouba (Souk-el-Arba), Kasserine, Thelepte, La Fauconnerie, Soloman, Carthage and Bizerte. You only have to go back once again and then you will know what I mean.

In general the conditions in Tunisia have not changed much, other than the roads are better and there are more hotels. The natives are basically the same. They still sit on the side of the road selling their wares, especially eggs. It was somewhat difficult to locate the airport in Thelepte, but I met an old sheep herder, who remembered the American airfields. Of course, he could not speak Arabic, but, luckily, his grandson spoke French and I was able to find out where the airfields were. I thought for a while that I had gotten all this information free, but soon I was asked by the sheep herder "Now that

I have given you this information, I need some money."

I returned to Tunis after my trip to Southern Tunisia, and I went to the American Embassy and contacted the military office. They are very anxious to have us go back next year. They advised me that there is an American Cemetery in Carthage where some of our officers and enlisted men are buried. This is a beautiful location and is immaculately kept up by the American Battle Monument Commission, who also employ several of the local help. In fact, there is one Tunisian who has been there since all of our boys were brought in from various areas in Tunisia to be placed in this cemetery.

Colonel Akers and I met a few days ago and agreed that we should let you know the names of the men who are buried there. The list is as follows:

2nd Lieutenant John B. Binkley	86th
Staff Sergeant Edward J. Butts	86th
Captain Foy Draper	97th
Staff Sergeant Orel E. Edwards	86th
Staff Sergeant Kenneth Gasser	97th
Staff Sergeant Edwin Glenn	86th
Staff Sergeant Carl D. Hansen	86th
Staff Sergeant Charles F. Hinkle	85th
Staff Sergeant Sidney R. Holland	97th
2nd Lieutenant George R. Land Jr.	84th
Staff Sergeant Robert R. Lawless	85th
Staff Sergeant Robert W. Martin	85th
Staff Sergeant Donald G. Vorpahl	86th
Staff Sergeant Wilbert R. Welch	84th

The following list is on the Wall of the Missing, their remains were never identified:

1st Lieutenant Irvin E. Artz, Jr.	97th
Staff Sergeant Stephen R. Breinin	97th
Staff Sergeant Earl F. Endthoff	97th
Captain Donald B. Martz	85th
Staff Sergeant Eugene L. Parenteau	97th
Staff Sergeant Howard A. Smith	84th
Staff Sergeant Arthur H. Weddel	85th

The total number buried there is 2,840; on the Wall of the Missing there are 3,724 names inscribed and there is one Medal of Honor. Among some of the headstones there is one which marks the tomb of seven Americans, whose identity is unknown. Also, two adjacent headstones mark the graves of four men whose names are known, but whose remains could not be separately identified. A bronze tablet between these graves records their names. In this cemetery also, in three instances, two brothers are buried side by side.

ROME, JUNE 1944

by Lester "Lucky" Wollard

The city of Rome fell to the Allies on June 4, 1944. Shortly thereafter, the 47th Bomb Group moved up from the Naples area. Following the terrible Casino battles and the long costly Anzio invasion and struggle, the group moved to a flat plain a few miles west of Rome. The squadrons were at different places around the field and headquarters was near the main road.

I, Lucky Wollard, had been with headquarters since Sicily and was now the "group weather

sergeant" under the weather officer, Captain Walter Snyder. Our big weather office was located in the rear of the intelligence trailer and was really a small office. In the office we had two chart boards, two chairs, one barometer and one typewriter. If one of us had to go out, the other would have to stand in order to pass.

It was a hot June day just before noon and I was alone in our teeny little office, preparing the "weather briefing" for the afternoon's mission. I heard a voice outside calling, "Hey Mac." Looking out the tiny door, I saw two GIs in combat boots, and their shoulder patches showed them to be infantry soldiers from the 85th Division, which I knew had a rest area in Rome.

On this hot day these two front line troops were wandering around and wondering if there might be a chance that they could get a ride in one of our planes. We talked for a few minutes and I said, "let's go find out." I took them to the operation tent, just next to my weather office, and asked Colonel Marion Akers if there might be a chance? He greeted them warmly and said, "we'll check around the squadrons and see." A couple of minutes later Colonel Akers smiled at them and said, "Yes there's a few empty seats and you guys can go along." Wow! were they ever thrilled and so excited. "Gee" they said, "to get to fly in a bomber, boy this is great."

Someone drove them off for flight gear (parachutes) some chow, briefing, and off they went. Colonel Akers and I commented on the sad plight of the "poor front line foot soldiers," and how they had it so danged tough and rough. Always tired, dirty, wet or cold, scared, mud, fighting, and we by contrast had it so nice with our big tents, cots, plenty of blankets, mess tent close by, lots of supplies and the good stuff. We both felt sorry for these soldiers, and were really glad they could get to go on a flight. We felt good.

Later, back in my teeny little office (alone) doing whatever weather duties were required in the late afternoon, when again I hear a voice outside. Someone was saying "Hey Sarge." I looked outside, and yep, there were these two infantry soldiers back from the mission. I gave em a big smile, waved and went to the door and said "Hi Guys, how'd it go?" expecting some great exclamations, like "Oh great, super, etc." But no, they were not smiling at all, and they didn't look one bit happy.

One guy pointed his finger at me and said, "Man you can keep this Air Corps and you can shove it." The other GI said, "Yeh, you can stick it." They both were saying "Hey, you know they shoot at you up there and you can't get out." The other guy said "You got no place to hide, you are stuck in there, you guys are nuts."

I was taken back a bit and wondered if we'd had a bad mission, so we went over to Colonel Akers and I asked quietly if "we'd had a nasty mission?" "No" he said, "It was a milk run, why?" I told him "these two GIs were scared silly." Akers talked with them about the mission, but they were not about to change their feelings and opinions of flying in combat in "Those dumb planes." They told us in no uncertain terms and were very emphatic, that they "would not get into those damn dumb planes again ever, you guys are nuts." Then they said "we are going to



Seeing the sights of Rome. (Courtesy of Tom Ratts)



stay right on the ground, where it is safe." And off they went towards Rome.

We in the Air Corps had always been mindful of the fearful front line combatants conditions. Our hearts went out to them, and I always felt if I were in their shoes, I'd be plenty scared. I never dreamed how they would feel in our shoes, "scared silly."

This happening on that hot day near Rome, Italy, June 1944, caused me to do some re-justifying of my thoughts and my attitudes about the other services. Each person may think that they are the best or have it the best. Our P-47 flyers think they have and do the best. The B-26

jockies are sure they have and do the best. The B-17 divers, the aerial gunners, the artillery, transportation, the Navy, Marines, Submariners, Infantry foot soldier, Air Corps weather men, or you name it. Each one serving God and country, each in their own branch and in their own way, and everyone very proud of it.

We in the 47th Bombardment Group, with our beloved twin engine A-20B light bombers, our great achievements and proud record were of course "The very best," and we knew it.

Oh I also flew on a couple of missions out of that Rome Air Base. They were "milk runs." A little shooting, some flak, but safe.



Seeing the sights of Rome. (Courtesy of Tom Ratts)

And oh, I still feel very sorry for those front line troops and the hard conditions under which they must and are willing to serve. But as for me? I said then that, "I will stay in the Air Corps, where it is safe.

EXTRAORDINARY TIMES

by James Ray

Flying the A-20s planes from the United States to the combat zone in Tunisia during the month of March 1943 was quite a feat in itself. The technology, skill and risk factors involved would have prohibited such a venture during ordinary times. But those days were not ordinary; a war had to be fought.

1st Lieutenant Milton Liddle, Staff Sergeant Leonard Wessel and myself had been in training with the 46th Bomb Group at Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma City long enough for Lieutenant Liddle to get in his required 25 hours of pilot training for combat duty on A-20s. Lieutenant Liddle was from Arizona and had been in the Army for several years prior to World War II as an officer in the cavalry. Shortly after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, he went through aviation cadet training.

Leonard Wessel from Louisville, Kentucky, had finished Armament School at Lowry Field, Colorado. I was from Springfield, Missouri and had finished Airplane Mechanic School at Chanute Field, Illinois. Both Leonard and I had been through the five weeks' Aerial Gunnery School at Tyndall Field, Florida. His designated job on our crew was armament/gunner and mine was engineer/gunner. Actually, I had had very little experience as a mechanic.

The A-20 was a fast, short range, highly maneuverable, light bomber attack plane for support of our ground troops. The British military named it *Havoc*. We called it the *Boston*

Bomber. It was designed to operate from fields close to the front lines and hedge hop at low altitudes for surprise attacks on enemy installations. In the North African Campaign, low level attacks proved to be quite costly in terms of our own casualties. Therefore, after the African Campaign most missions pulled by A-20s were done at medium altitudes ranging from 6,000 to 12,000 feet. The maximum speed of the A-20 was about 300 mph with cruising speeds of 225-250 mph.

Twelve crews from the 46th Bomb Group were flown in a C-47 cargo plane from Will Rogers Field to a Navy Air Base at Memphis, Tennessee. There, each crew was assigned to a new A-20, all readied for the big trip. The A-20 had a maximum range of about three hours or somewhat over 700 miles. Since there was an ocean to cross, extra fuel tanks were installed. One tank was added in the canopy behind the pilot's head and in front of the gunner's compartment. A large tank was installed in the bomb bay. Actually, those 12 A-20s were just flying gasoline storage facilities.

After spending a day or two at the Memphis Air Base, we flew in our new A-20s to Homestead Field, Florida where "25 hour-after engine change" inspections were performed on each plane.

From Homestead we were guided by a crew from the Ferrying Command who led the way for us in a B-25 to Freetown, Sierra Leone on the West Coast of Africa. We flew by way of Puerto Rico; Georgetown, British Guiana; Belem, Brazil; then to Natal, Brazil, staying overnight and refueling in each of those locations.

We arrived at Natal, Brazil in the late afternoon. It was my job to see that all gasoline tanks on our plane were full in preparation for the next morning's hop to Ascension Island, our longest and most dreaded of flights. I filled them full, but that turned out to be a serious problem.

Ascension Island is a small dot all by itself on the South Atlantic map, approximately six miles in diameter and a little over 1,400 miles east of Natal. It was quite a navigational challenge to the Ferrying Command crew leading the way.

The next morning we took off for that tiny, volcanic island. Soon after take-off, I noticed that gasoline was trailing like a small, rippling ribbon from the overflow line of the right wing tank. I had seen that a few times before and was not worried, because usually after the level of gasoline in the tank would get a little below the full level, the overflowing would cease. Besides, in the opinion of others who had previously witnessed the same thing, only a very small amount of gasoline caught in the slip stream would produce several feet of this rippling, ribbon affect.

After a couple of hours the ribbon of gasoline was still coming out of the overflow. I wanted to get Lieutenant Liddle's opinion about the situation. The only communication to the pilot was by means of a throat mike which more often than not was rather difficult to hear, especially above the roar of the engines. I called Lieutenant Liddle to advise what I had observed; his reply was "Roger." About an hour later he called me and wanted to know if the overflow had stopped. He said the fuel gauges indicated that we were using more fuel than what he thought was normal, but that he believed we had enough to get us to the island. Anyhow, we were almost to the point of no return so the decision was to proceed.

The overflowing never stopped. Apparently, a syphoning action had taken place. When we were about a half-hour from Ascension Island, Lieutenant Liddle called in to request clearance to be the first to land for emergency purpose. We were granted that request and were on the final leg before the landing when I saw that the landing gears were down but the right landing was not locked, it just dangled in the slip stream. I tried to call Lieutenant Liddle, but he was tuned in to the operations tower and could not hear me. I put the emergency aileron stick in place to jiggle the aileron so as to get his attention. At the same time Leonard and I made ready for a rough landing. Luckily the ground crew saw what was happening and signalled the pilot to pull up. Lieutenant Liddle "gave it the gun" and we were off again. He bounced the plane a couple of times, but still the right landing gear failed to lock in place. He pulled up the landing gears and advised Leonard and I that he would try one more big bounce and drop the landing gears at the same time of the bounce. He stated that the fuel gauges were reading empty and if the right landing gear failed to lock in place, he would pull up the landing gears and come in on our belly. That was a tough decision. If we were to attempt to parachute, we might run out of fuel before reaching an altitude safe enough to jump. But landing on the belly with an empty gasoline tank full of flammable vapors could be a disaster.

Lieutenant Liddle dropped the landing gears while making a big bounce, both landing gears came down and locked. What a relief. The landing was normal. When we attempted to taxi into the parking area both engines quit running; we were out of gas and had to be towed to the parking area.

About the first person I saw after we got out of the plane was the line chief, a big, burly master sergeant, who proceeded to "chew" on me. He gave me a lesson about the fuel system that I never forgot. We had the fuel valves on "cross feed." In this case, where the fuel was siphoning out the right wing tank. We should have turned on only the right wing tank valve and turned off the cross feed. Then when the right tank was near empty, we should have turned on all the other fuel valves individually and turned off the right wing tank valve. Such a simple thing to learn and almost too late but for the grace of God and very excellent pilot.

From the Ascension Island we flew to Freetown in Sierra Leone, then to Dakar in Seneca, across the Sahara Desert, mostly in Mauritania, through a pass in the Atlas Mountains, then to Casablanca in Morocco; through Algeria and finally to Souk-el-arba in Tunisia where we joined the 85th Bomb Squadron of the 47th Bomb Group. We arrived during the month of April 1943. Of the 12 A-20 crews who left together from Oklahoma City, we were among the first four crews to arrive at the 47th. Various mechanical problems along the way delayed the arrival of the remainder.

Liddle, Wessel and I flew together on seven missions during the Tunisian Campaign. We were based in Malta during the invasion of Sicily in July 1943 where we were on several more missions. We were based in Sicily and several other places in the southern half of Italy. Fortunately, we completed our 50 mission requirement for a free ticket home about February 1944.

There was only a time or two that we saw any enemy aircraft and I, personally, never fired a shot at one. Our biggest problems were those

88mm guns the Germans used so skillfully, and they caused a number of casualties to the 47th Bomb Group. One of the best friends I had at the time was Howard Smith from North Carolina. He and I had gone through Airplane Mechanic School, training with the 48th and 46th Bomb Groups and Aerial Gunnery School. He and the crew he was with were shot down during a mission over Sciacca in Sicily, June 1943. That crew, along with other crews, were considered MIA for quite sometime and later considered KIA.

Our pilots were very skilled in evasive action to keep the enemy guessing as to how to aim their flak guns. Evasive action consisted of twisting, turning, rapid altitude and speed changes, all in formation, while going to or returning from the target area. No doubt evasive action prevented a considerable number of casualties. What everyone "sweated out" was the bomb run. The bombardier needed about a minute of straight, slow, constant and steady flight to get a good bead on our mission's target. That was when we were the most vulnerable as targets of the 88mm gunners. They sometimes would simply blacken the sky with flak over the target area. Not all of our missions were like that as described above. Some were what we called "milk runs" which were targets that had very little enemy resistance.

A MILD CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY

by Ted Kuhlman

After much training with the 47th Bomb Group in the United States, we finally received orders for duty overseas. We picked up our new

A-20s in Kansas City, Missouri and headed for Westover Field, Massachusetts which was our designated staging area. We left there on October 3, 1942, and would learn what a frustrating experience it could be to get across the North Atlantic at this time of year. Our frustrations were born of incredibly bad weather.

After stops in Labrador and Greenland, we finally arrived in Iceland on October 28. From there our destination was Prestwick, Scotland, but again we couldn't get in because of weather. We decided to go for Belfast, Ireland, where we found an RAF airport. It was already dusk, and never had a runway looked so inviting. We landed and were guided to the ramp. I pulled up and parked and soon noticed an RAF officer standing below my window and apparently making notes on his pad. I climbed out and walked up to him and said, "Any problems, Sir?" He replied he was just jotting down the names below the pilot's window which read: Lieutenant T.J. Kuhlman, Staff Sergeant A.H. Ziegelmeyer, Corporal K.R. Ernst.

After reading that Germanic-sounding roster, he finally said to me, "Lieutenant, are you sure you landed in the right country?" After that he popped for a couple of drinks in the club.

IN-FLIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY

by Eugene B. Boward

On May 25, 1944, the 86th Bomb Squadron completed a mission which many would agree was among the more-dramatic of missions because it was a low-level daylight mission against hundreds of German vehicles just outside of the Anzio Beachhead. This is not to say that the mission was any more successful or strategically important than other note-worthy operations the 47th Bomb Group was involved in. Such as, for example, the Kasserine Pass action that resulted in the 47th first Unit Citation. It was just somewhat different from routine day missions and was thought of by most of those with the 86th Squadron as Captain Bastian's low-level raid, personality oriented, at least in the gunners section. Certainly the mission should be described somewhere in the 47th Bomb Group history.

For the past couple years, I've been trying to locate the one (or two) persons who would be best-qualified to recount the action. They would be Captain Bastian or Lieutenant Schuck. I've been unable to locate either of them or any other of their crew members. So, I'll try my version, though based upon my very-limited observation and lacking in other important information.

As I recall: The 86th Squadron was alerted for an early morning mission which I felt was not pre-planned. I do not believe we were briefed, as was customary before a day mission in squadron strength. Also, I believe we were given orders to not fly the mission below 3,000 feet altitude (which I assumed was typical group policy against low-level bombing). I don't know how I heard of this limitation.

Crews went immediately to the aircraft (some miles from our squadron area). I flew in #59 with Lieutenant Schuck, pilot, and Sergeant Ray Trecziac, upper gunner with single caliber .50 Browning. We had no bombardier/navigator, although #59 had a "glass nose." Instead,



L to R: S/Sgt. Jimmy Williamson, gunner; Capt. Ted J. Kuhlman, Pilot; S/Sgt. W. H. Hart, Gunner. 97th Bomb Group combat crew, Cape Bon, Tunisia. (Courtesy of Ted J. Kuhlman)

we had a passenger, a private from some Army medical unit who had just dropped by the squadron to try for a ride on a mission. Mac, the squadron parachute man, fitted him with a chute. At the flight line Ray and I gave the medic very quick instructions on the use of intercom radio (how to respond to pilot's query if everyone was okay before take-off), and also brief words on how to bail out if necessary. Then we entered the A-20, which was an early model without the Martin top turret.

Upon entering, I got an immediate unpleasant surprise, I was to be "stuck" with the aerial camera and not the neat little hand-held Fairchild camera, but the huge heavy electrically-operated British camera. I had not wanted to be bothered with a camera on what promised to be an interesting mission (but I did not really know what the mission was about). Even worse, I was afraid of that unwieldy camera because one had to kneel on very edge of the escape hatch and lean out over the hatch opening to point the camera nearly straight down in order to take photos on a low-level raid, where bombs hit directly under the aircraft. The photographer's balance was precarious and he could easily be thrown out of the hatch if the pilot pulled an abrupt climb or turn. Since he faced rearward, the photo/gunner could not see the oncoming target. Consequently, on a low-level attack, the photo/gunner would sight his target with only a second or two before it passed out of the vision allowed by the small escape hatch opening. It was difficult to sight/frame/photograph a specific spot on the ground at that low-altitude and high speed. The British camera was built for use at much higher altitude than low level raids.

Additionally, when I picked up that big "monster," the back plate fell off to expose the film. I replaced the cover, but believed the film was ruined. Nevertheless, I had to attempt my photographing obligation.

Immediately after take-off, I opened the hatch cover and tried to find an easy way to handle that camera in the situation I anticipated. Then I noticed we were not circling the field to allow the usual squadron formation of aircraft (two flights of six aircraft). We were headed north at very low altitude and I awaited the usual climb up to several thousand feet. It never happened. The terrain just raced by under us, then suddenly, I saw a road filled with German vehicles of all kinds. There were many bomb craters and wrecked vehicles. That was our target. What I did not know was that there were only two A-20s down there and that the remainder of the squadron were up around 3,000 or so feet. Only Captain Bastian, squadron leader and Lieutenant Schuck (who I was flying with) went low level.

Though I don't recall how many times those two pilots attacked, up and down the road, I believe it was about six times. I struggled with that camera and had a difficult time swinging it fast enough to track the fast-moving ground targets and to take photos before the target was blocked by the end of the hatch opening. Many times I would have only the hatch-cover in the view finder by the time I was ready to press the trigger. Fortunately, the film was "advancing" electrically and I could take fast consecutive photos when lucky. All the while, though, I was



The cooks in their kitchen. (Courtesy of Tom Ratts)



The chow line. (Courtesy of Tom Ratts)

fearful of being thrown out of the hatch (camera and all) at each end of the target runs—and too low for chute opening. That did not happen. Lieutenant Schuck's turns were smooth. He was dropping his own bombs without aid of a bombardier and was strafing the target until the guns jammed. Finally, I decided to stop trying to photograph targets and started strafing, because I did not want to waste all the time on a camera that most likely had bad film. After I strafed about 100 rounds of .30 caliber bullets our plane pulled up and headed homeward.

That road target was a mess of broken German vehicles and bodies. They never had a chance. I did not see any antiaircraft fire or Luftwaffe. They were completely at our mercy. As we pulled up and away, I could see a bigger picture of the area. Amid the destroyed vehicles there were yet other tanks, trucks, etc. desperately attempting to hide, some in ridiculous at-

tempts to hide a tank under a tiny tree, or trucks in a shallow stone quarry. I suspect more than one of us felt more sad than elated over the end result.

Back at the base there was jubilation. I did not tell Lieutenant Schuck or Captain Bastian that I had a camera or took photos. It was always assumed that the person with the camera took photos. I did learn that only Bastian and Schuck went low-level and the remainder of the squadron was up to 3000 feet or more altitude.

Later I heard Captain Bastian was reprimanded for disobeying orders prohibiting low-level attack, and that Captain Bastian said "cloud cover" forced him to go down low to attack. Then I heard my photos were good. That was bad for Bastian because the photos showed clearly the shadows from bomb burst smoke. Then our rumors indicated Bastian was "confined to quarters" for court-martial because of disobeying

orders. Finally we heard that 12th Air Force Headquarters called the 47th Group to inquire about the raid associated with the photos, and when learning about Bastian's "Quarters Arrest" they ordered his release and an award for his missions. Ironically, the photos that got Captain Bastian into trouble also got him out of it.

Later, I heard, or observed, the details of Captain Bastian's low level raid. I admit that I saw little of the whole episode; I only saw what was visible through the escape hatch and it all went by very fast. Much of what I have written is from hearsay, so I make no claims for accuracy. I can't locate anyone from that mission to confirm or deny what I have said.

Some other facts: Captain Bastian received a Silver Star for the mission. Lt. Schuck received the Distinguished Flying Cross. The photos were published in various magazines, *Yank*, *Air Force*, *Flying* and an Army publication.

History records that the Herman Goering Division was almost wiped out on that day by 12th Air Force planes. The Army counted 675 German vehicles destroyed; the Air Force claimed 6%. I recall our intelligence officer telling us that and later read it in an official Army publication. I believe our squadron was credited with about 30 vehicles destroyed. I'm not certain if that was just Bastian/Schuck credit or for the whole squadron. Most of the destruction was caused by the fighter/bombers of 12th Air Force on the day of the Anzio "breakout."

THE MOST DANGEROUS THING IN THE ARMY

by Howard Nance, Major USAF (RET)

When Rommel was threatening to plunge through Kasserine, our group was at Thelepte Airfield (the first time) and ordered to withdraw to Youks-les-Bains. As a junior second lieutenant, I was put in charge of two 6x6's and a jeep with half a dozen men as a salvage and clean up detail. After about an hour we headed out to rejoin the group. An hour later I signaled for a "rest stop." There being no road signs or mileage markers, I was consulting an aerial navigation map which I had scrounged.

I had it spread out over the hood of the jeep when a command car pulled up and a crusty old Army colonel dismounted and wanted to know who was in command and where we were going. I saluted and reported. Looking at my map he said, "son, if you continue this line of march within four or five miles you will run right into German lines." "Now you do a 180 degree turn and take the first road to your right and you'll soon join up with your outfit."

Climbing back into his command car, he turned to the two officers in the back seat, and waving his riding crop in my direction he said, "There gentleman is the most dangerous thing in the Army, a second lieutenant with a map."

MY 42ND MISSION

by Russell C. Worchel, Staff Sergeant

My 42nd mission occurred on March 11, 1944. We flew plane #90, A-20B. Crew members were Lieutenant Kocher, bombardier/navigator, Lieutenant Andreotti; upper gunner,

Sergeant Wilson and lower gunner, Sergeant Worchel. Bomb load consisted of twelve 260 frags and two 26 flares.

Our left engine cut out momentarily on take off but came back okay though continuing to run rough. It was a dark night with poor visibility, due to ground haze. I pushed out four bundles of propaganda leaflets through the open hatch to fall on front line enemy troops, then we headed for Zone B target area.

Just as we crossed the Po River near the city of Borgaforte, a flash bomb exploded about two feet below us and almost at the same time a German fighter plane made a pass at us coming in at 10 o'clock half high letting us have about 75 bursts.

Pilot Kocher immediately threw the plane into such violent evasive action that I thought we had been hit. My body lifted from the bottom of the plane and hung suspended in air near top as we went into a steep dive. I managed to grab a control cable with one hand and I believe that's all that kept me from being swept out the open lower hatch as Pilot Kocher pulled out of the dive.

As it was, my parachute chest pack, flak vest, helmet and flash light, all of which had been on the floor beside me, were thrown out into space. My communication cord for mike and speaker had been disconnected during the evasive action so when the pilot came on the intercom to tell us the plane was under control, I couldn't hear him.

Now heavy flak was bursting around us close enough to rock the plane. The fighter started another pass from 5 o'clock but pulled off. The upper gunner conveyed to the pilot that we only had one chest pack chute for two gunners. We salvoed our bomb load on a motor convoy in the area of Traverstele near the Po River and had a quiet trip back to base.

My pilot was troubled by the stress his evasive action put me through, but the next day our squadron commander held a briefing for all flying crew members and said he would have reacted the same way and ordered that all chest pack chutes be snapped in place and flak suits and helmets be worn when flying over enemy territory. A lesson well learned.

MEMORIES OF WAR

by Lowell McCuen

It was a privilege and honor to serve our country during World War II. I was with 16th Bomb Squadron, 27th Bomb Group, July 1942 to July 1, 1943, and went to Rabat, North Africa Replacement Center.

Transferred to 84th Bomb Squadron, 47th Bomb Group to Cape Bon North Africa on July 4, 1943, with pilot Captain Vance. I went on first mission July 6 over Sciacca Air Base, Sicily. There was heavy flak and enemy aircraft.

Moved to island of Malta on July 21, 1943, the most heavily bombed place in the world. Over 3,000 raids have been made on Malta. We always went to a bar after flying our missions for the day. The lady that owned it always asked us if that was any of our friends that didn't come back. We never could figure out how she knew that some of our planes didn't come back. We

asked her how she got that information and she said, "I count you when you go out and count you when you come back."

Moved to Gela, Sicily August 10, 1943. Moved up near Mount Etna near Catania, Sicily.

As you fly missions, your concerns and worries are greater. The magic number of 50 missions are coming closer and as your number of missions increase, you wonder if you will make it to 50.

Sicilian Campaign over invasion of Italy, September 3, 1943; September 8, Italians unconditional surrender; September 27 left for Taranto, Italy; moved to Foggia, Italy October 15, 1943.

Along about this time, Ernie Pyle spent time with the 84th Bomb Squadron. He wrote a great story on the 47th, *Brave Men*. We went to briefings before going on our missions; they detailed our target area and also if flak would be heavy.

As day goes and night comes, your buddies all get together and talk about your home town, girl friends, and getting back home.

One story comes to mind concerning Barry W. Sendell from upstate New York. He always talked about getting back home and taking his mother and girlfriend up in the mountains for a vacation, and in the next breath he would tell you he wasn't going to make it home. On October 16, 1943, Barry Sendell was killed in action.

On the good side, on October 22, Staff Sergeant Quick and Staff Sergeant Tanguma were shot down. October 23, Staff Sergeant Quick was returned by the underground from the enemy. October 24, Staff Sergeant Tanguma was returned by the underground.

November 24, 1943, went on mission #25 now am on the downhill side. December 15, 1943, mission over Anzio, Lieutenant Imes, Staff Sergeant Frederick, Private Elliot were shot down by ME-109. Frederick and Elliot bailed out. Lieutenant Imes went down with the plane.

In 1989, a group of us retraced our steps through Sicily and Italy. At the cemetery in Anzio we went to the chapel and on the wall outside where the names of those killed or missing in action were: Lieutenant Imes, Staff Sergeant Frederick and Private Elliot were still listed as missing in action.

January 1, moved from Foggia to Mount Vesuvius; was stationed at the base of Mount Vesuvius.

January 18, 1944, coming near the end of his missions. January 20, 1944, completed his 50th mission today. Very tough one, Captain Vance pilot; Lieutenant Hammond, bombardier; Staff Sergeant Folta, Staff Sergeant McCuen. They were shot up by flak and Lieutenant Hammond wounded. Radio was shot up and holes were throughout plane. We had no communication with our pilot. Captain Vance pulled out of formation and headed back to home base to get help for Lieutenant Hammond.

We went on three more missions for a total of 53 and was grounded on January 27, 1944.

February 11, 1944, left the 84th Squadron; went to Naples and had 30 days to get back to Casablanca. Staff Sergeant Jim Messner, Staff Sergeant Jack Botts, Staff Sergeant Andy Maciejsky all came home together.

To all the ground crew, pilots, bombardiers, gunners and all other personnel of the 47th, we

did the job that had to be done. To Captain Vance whom I completed 47 out of 53 missions with, we did what we were here to do and made it all the way.

LAST COMBAT MISSION OF THE 47TH IN ITALY

by Marion Akers

It was a cold, dark, lonely night in that dug-out on the edge of the Tunisian Desert. The Germans were 35 miles across the sands to the south-east of our "airfield" - Thelepte, a barren, buildingless, treeless, waterless hunk of desert devoid of any sign of plant life on an area roughly a mile and half square that we used for landings and take-offs (usually six A-20s abreast).

We had arrived at Thelepte roughly 79 hours earlier, 12 airplanes (A-20s) with crews and maximum load of bombs and ammunition, after spending six days en route from Medouina (near Casablanca). This included Christmas Eve and Christmas Day stuck in the mud and heavy rains at Taforoui Airfield in Oran, Algeria. We were the first element of the 97th Squadron to enter combat following 12 airplanes from the 86th Squadron (commanded by R.E. Horner) that had arrived at Youks-les-Bains, some 60 miles behind us, some two weeks earlier.

It was approaching midnight, December 31, 1942. We had received our baptism of fire and knew from the flak and attacks by German fighters (ME-109s) that this was not the Carolina maneuvers; this was the real thing. The flicker-



Vesuvius Airfield, Italy - February 22, 1944. Members of the press being briefed prior to flying missions with 47th Bomb Group over Anzio Beachhead. From L to R: Tom Treanor, Los Angeles Times; Col. Malcolm Green, CO 47th Bomb Group; Maj. Marion Akers, 47th Group Ops. Officer; Ken Dixon, Associated Press; Michael Chinigo, International News Service; Lt. Banof, 47th Group Intelligence; Charles Seawood, Acme Photo Service; Jackie Foisie, Stars & Stripes; Hal Wright, Paramount News Service. Press members had been cleared to fly on missions over the Anzio invasion area to see, first hand, action below and in the skies above. (Courtesy of Marion Akers)



Flak over Naples harbor, near Mt. Vesuvius, during a German night bombing attack. (Courtesy of Walter Walker)

ing light from two coffee tins of burning gasoline and the oxygen starved air in the dugout were good reasons for the few of us to stop what we were doing and relax for awhile. After all, it was New Year's Eve, and what a different one it was.

The task we were performing required a healthy bit of caution and concentration. We were disassembling bomb fuses (eight second delay tail fuses) cutting them back to make one and a half to two second delay fuses, then reassembling them. We were doing this because we had no fuses satisfactory for use in attacking German tanks at low level, our targets for the next day.

Our comments about past New Year Eves soon turned to wonderings: wonder what will the new year bring; an end to the war and peace in the world? A more intensified war; who will be winning? What about the war against Japan; after all, we had thought at one time we were going to the Pacific to make low-level torpedo attacks against the Japanese navy. How long will the war with Germany last and where will we be when it ends, if we're still alive (these words were not spoken, but were on everyone's mind).

"If any of us are still alive when the war ends, we'll probably be on a mission and they'll call us on the radio and tell us to turn around and go home. The war is over." The group broke into laughter at the very thought of such a fantasy. It came from "Pinky" Arnold (Lieutenant Robert W. Arnold), my top tail gunner whose timely, witty and light-hearted remarks became great moral boosters for us all.

Now nearly two and a half years later, May 2, 1945, the 47th is once again in Italy after North Africa, Malta, Sicily, Italy, Corsica and Southern France. It was a day of confusing and contradicting reports regarding the surrender of the German armies in Italy. One "official" report was soon followed by more confusing reports.

During the preceding 11 months, the 47th

had converted to night operations. Our mission was to stop the German movements at night. The Allied air superiority and the fighters and fighter bombers had the enemy pinned down well during the day. Our job was to do the same at night with our interdiction and search and destroy missions.

The weather in the upper Po Valley and Brenner Pass area in northern Italy was forecast to be bad with little or no chance for search and destroy missions. My squadron, the 86th, was scheduled to fly the first mission. Because of the forecast of poor weather conditions, I opted to take the first mission and leave the rest of the squadron on the ground until we got a good look at the weather. I would then radio back to either launch or stand down.

As we flew north over Bologna, previously a real hot spot because of intense German AA fire, we saw what appeared to be a huge celebration in progress. We called the Area Radar Control (they had a commanding radar view of most of the Po Valley) and asked what was going on, was the war over? "No," was the answer, "just a premature bit of celebrating."

Approaching the Po River, we entered heavy clouds, so started a climb to give us clearance over the Alps around the Brenner Pass so we could look for retreating German convoys, weather permitting. At 16,000 feet in the clouds and still climbing, the radio crackled with, "Prowler One, this is radar control, where are you going?"

"I've got a load of bombs here I'm going to deliver to some Germans, if I can find them," I responded.

"Oh no, you're not," was radar's reply, "turn around and go home. we just got the word. The war in Italy is over, it's official, I say. Turn around and go home. The war in Italy is over."

Stunned for a few moments, I finally chal-

lenged and counter-challenged radar. The replies were correct. I was satisfied the message was authentic.

For a few seconds, there was silence as I wondered about what had just happened. I knew I wasn't dreaming, or was I? Then on the intercom came this familiar voice, "Colonel, just like we said a long time ago, turn around and go home, the war's over."

Yep, you guessed it. That was "Pinky" Arnold (captain now) manning those two turrets in the back of the A-26C, still protecting our rear. Then, in his usual calm and business like voice, Lieutenant Roy Naylor announced from his bombardier/navigator position, "Take an initial heading of 210 for home, and, let's go home." This we did. There was much chatter, shouts of joy, jubilation, can you believe its, etc. on the intercom going home that night. I wish there had been a way to make a tape recording of it. What a keepsake that would have made. Before landing, we dropped our bombs (armed) in the Mediterranean Sea. We were taking no chances on one of those things somehow detonating on landing, not after we had come this far. We probably killed a few fish that night with those bombs, but we were so glad they would not be killing any more people.

The war in Italy was over. It was time to celebrate and to give thanks for still being alive and to remember those who had not been so fortunate.

This was the last mission of the 47th in the war in Italy and also in World War II. The war in Central Europe ended shortly, thereafter, without our becoming involved. We were regrouping at Goldsboro, North Carolina, in early August 1945 to go to the Pacific with all new specially equipped airplanes, when the Japanese surrendered. At last, the war was really over.



An encampment of captured Germans. (Courtesy of Ed Burnely)



Captured German aircraft. L to R: Bagent, Akers, Stewart, Faber. (Courtesy of Ed Burnely)



(Courtesy of Howard Nance)



84th Sq.



85th Sq.



1943. L to R: Herman, Pew, Brown, Rudolph, Willis. (Courtesy of Howard Nance)



86th Sq.



97th Sq.

Unit Citation I

HEADQUARTERS TWELFTH AIR FORCE
APO 650

23 December 1944

GENERAL ORDERS)

NUMBER 277 0

CITATION OF UNIT

Under the provisions of Circular 333, War Department, 1943, and Circular 89, North African Theater of Operations, 10 July 1944, the 47th Bombardment Group (L), Air Corps, United States Army, is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy in North Africa on 22 February 1943.

During the critical period from 12 to 22 February 1943, when Axis forces broke through the Kasserine Pass and imperiled the entire Allied position in Algeria, the 47th Bombardment Group, rising above the normal call of duty in a decisive performance, distinguished itself by conspicuous gallantry and unyielding determination in the face of almost insurmountable odds. With the Allied advanced airfields at Thelpte, Tunisia, already overrun and a ground attack on their remaining base at Youks-les-Bains in Algeria imminent, personnel of the 47th Bombardment Group resolutely continued to maintain this field operational, working long hours under constant strafing and bombardment and often standing guard against expected attack when off duty. On 21 February when the enemy breakthrough threatened to become an Allied disaster, our air forces received urgent orders to give all possible support in stopping their advance. As the most advanced bombardment unit in the theater, the 47th Bombardment Group, though undermanned, undersupplied, and its facilities already overtaxed, responded with an all-out effort. Working throughout the night to repair, service and load their A-20 type aircraft with the necessary bombs, ground crews succeeded in maintaining them in continuous assault on the approaching hostile forces from first light until fall of darkness on 22 February. Determined pilots, taking off in adverse flying weather, skillfully maneuvered through cloud and rain-obscured mountain passes to locate their targets. Then, displaying utmost courage and combat proficiency, they repeatedly attacked at minimum altitude through intense and accurate anti-aircraft fire, enabling their bombardiers to release more than seven tons of bombs upon the advancing armored columns with such devastating effect that before night fall they had turned the enemy back in full retreat. In the eleven missions flown on that one day, the 47th Bombardment Group, through its unconquerable battle spirit, contributed in great measure to lifting the Axis threat from Algeria and in so doing, profoundly influenced the course of the war in the North African Theater. By their extraordinary heroism, unyielding determination and selfless devotion to duty, the personnel of the 47th Bombardment Group have reflected highest credit upon themselves and the Military Service of the United States.

By command of Major General GAYNON:

/s/ CHARLES T. MYERS
Brigadier General, USA
Chief of Staff

OFFICIAL:

/s/t/ WILLIAM W. DICK
Colonel, ASD
Adjutant General

Copy

Unit Citation II

R E S T R I C T E D

HADJALAKES TELF & AIR FORCE
APO 650

GENERAL PROVS)

16 August 1945

ADJUTANT 178)

CITATION OF UNIT

Under the provisions of Circular 333, War Department, 1943, and Circular 73, MTOUSA, 12 May 1945, the 47th Bombardment Group (L) is cited for outstanding performance of duty in action against the enemy in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations from 21 April 1945 to 24 April 1945.

When, after 5½ months of intensive night aerial effort against enemy communications and other key targets in Northern Italy during which more than 600 tons of bombs were dropped on vital Po River Crossings in April alone, the 47th Bombardment Group (L) was called upon to render all-out effort in coordination with the Allied drive through the Po Valley, air and ground crews responded so valiantly as to exceed expectations. In the 60-hour period from sundown of 21 April to dawn of 24 April, flying around the clock despite unquestioned weariness of air crew members and an extreme shortage of ground personnel, assigned on a basis of a day-operating light bombardment group with six less aircraft per squadron than were actually assigned and called upon to maintain aircraft which in many cases had been in combat more than a year, the 47th Bombardment Group (L) flew 334 sorties against the enemy at the peak of the battle, hitting his motor transport and horse-drawn vehicles with such precision accuracy that he was unable to withdraw across the Po River as an organized, fighting force. Courageous airmen, in the face of adverse weather and rugged terrain which made night flying exceedingly difficult, relentlessly attacked the enemy night and day, while ground crews, supplemented by clerks and cooks who left their duties to bomb up the A-20 and A-26 aircraft, maintained operations for 60 consecutive hours with only brief and intermittent halts for sleep. In several hundred single-aircraft attacks which taxed the professional skill and determination of the air crews to the utmost, motor, rail and other transport in and to the North of the battle zone were attacked with highly destructive results. During this period, the Group was officially credited with destroying 55 motor vehicles, 17 railway cars, 1 fuel dump and many other varied targets while damaging 50 motor vehicles, 3 tanks and 18 railway cars; much greater damage and destruction was caused but could not be assessed in the darkness. Despite long months of training in evasive action, so intense and accurate was the anti-aircraft fire encountered that three aircraft were lost and four others damaged, yet those gallant airmen, many of whom flew voluntarily, displayed such extraordinary heroism and esprit de corps that they played a major role in defeating the enemy in Italy by preventing him from reaching the mountain fastnesses of the Southern Alps. The courage, determination, and selfless devotion to duty displayed by the personnel of the 47th Bombardment Group (L) in this last battle in Italy have reflected highest credit upon themselves and the Military Service of the United States.

BY COMMAND OF BRIGADIER GENERAL MYERS:

OFFICIAL:

CULPEPPER EXUM
Colonel, GSC
Chief of Staff

L D CUMMINGS
Lt Col, AGD
Adjutant General

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R E S T R I C T E D

47TH BOMB GROUP ROSTER

A

Ackerman, Edwin
Adair, John F.
Adams, Juanita
Akers, Marion J.
Akom, Benard
Allen Jr., Lonnie P.
Alt Jr., Glen A.
Ambrose, Chester
Anderson, John H.
Anderson, Michael
Andrews, William D.
Anes, Leonard J.
Angelo, William
Angioli, Walt
Angstadt, B.R.
Ankrom Jr., Harry B.
Argentine, Edward
Ashwood, John H.
Atchison, Delmar W.
Auer, Brenard J.
Auer, John R.
Ault, John
Axe, Robert

B

Bacci, Anthony D.
Baer, Robert O.
Baggs, George C.
Bain, Gordon
Baker, Harold W.
Baker, Howard
Balatti, Victor M.
Bales, Jack
Ball, W.A.
Balwinski, Louis John A.
Banker, Ernest
Barnett, Robert G.
Barr, Charles W.
Bascetta, Salvo
Baver, Allen E.
Bauerle Sr., Donald
Baughman, Frank
Bechtold, Harold
Beecroft, Jay L.
Beekman, Doug
Beetem, Donald G.
Bell, Everett
Bell, Hugh C.
Benskin, Stanly M.
Bensley, David
Berg, Robert S.
Bitzko, Joseph T.
Black Jr., Karl M.
Blaesing, Harold
Blevins, Virgle S.
Boizelle, Bill
Bonisar, Richard
Bonitatibus, Viviano
Boro, Leon
Borough Jr., E.P.
Botts, Jack
Bova, Nick
Boward, E.B.
Bowden, Donald L.
Bowen, C.N.
Boyajian, Edward J.
Boyer, Donald W.
Bracci, D.F.
Braden, Junior T.
Bradfield, D.D.
Braman, Grenville C.
Brassfield, Eugene P.
Brauer, Gibleert R.

Bray, J.C.
Breitenstein, Vernon
Brender, Troy D.
Brock, Donald
Broeg, Frank C.
Broman, Ted
Brown, Frederick M.
Brown, Henry
Brown, Newton E.
Brown, Winn
Brunette, E.R.
Bruno, Thomas
Bruss, Fred G.
Buchanan, John S.
Burger, Charles L.
Burgy, Willard
Burnley, Edwin
Buser, Regis G.
Byrne, Edward J.

C

Cain, James R.
Callahan, John M.
Cann, Jay Duane
Cardwell, J.C.
Carlson, Alvin L.
Carnahan, Karabuh
Carter, Jack H.
Carter, Robert M.
Carter, Samuel
Carvalho, Fred
Chalas, Costa
Chalek, Alverne
Chambers, Floyd S.
Chayka, Anthony
Chesley, Benjamin K.
Chess, E.
Chinn, Lewis
Chooljian, Deran
Christner, Nolan
Clark, Roy
Clark, Vernon B.
Cleveland, Leslie J.
Cline, Eugene L.
Clizbe, Reginald J.
Coole, Robert
Coblentz, Gaston
Colby, Ronald C.
Coldren, David S.
Collier, Walter
Collins, Robert C.
Collins, William W.
Colwell, Don F.
Coma, John W.
Condo, Dewitt B.
Conley, Keith
Cook, Selby G.
Coombs, Robert L.
Cornale, Louis
Corrigan, Emmett
Corwin, Milton
Couture, Ernie
Coyle, Waldo
Crader, Frank
Craighead, R.
Crane, Frank
Creighton, Vern
Creighton, Walter R.
Curry, Lewis H.
Curtis Jr., Joseph

D

Dale, John W.
Damen, Bob C.

Damro, Clifford P.
Davenport, Harry E.
Davis, Claude R.
Dean, William E.
DeGeorge, Frederick
DeShazo, Robert
DeShazo, Robert T.
Deaton, Roland E.
Delgallo, Felix
DiCesare, Frank
Didion, Isadore O.
Dillon, John
Dillon, Lewis
Dimario, Orlando
Dombroski, Frank
Dore, Robert
Doty, Perry
Double, Roy
Doumis, George F.
Downing, Wayne E.
Drlik, Frank
Drum, E.B.
Duffy, James J.
Dufield, Clark E.
Duhon, Velvet J.
Dumphy, Jim
Durbin, Henry
Durig, Robert
DuVall, John

E

Earle, Robert
Elder, Morris
Eldridge, Robert W.
Epperson, James B.
Evans, William H.
Ewen, Omar Tom
Exley, Edwin R.

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Falkingham, D.H.
Farabee, Harry J.
Farrell, Scotty
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Fatla, Aloisius
Felske, Elon
Felder, Leo E.
Fields, Orville
Fish, Nick
Fischer, Alvin M.
Ford, Wayne D.
Formichella, Tony
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Forstad, Vernon W.
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Foster, William E.
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Fredrico, Jino
Fry Jr., Ora Ray
Furlone, Antonio A.

G

Gaiser, James K.
Gall Jr., William F.
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Gallup, Richard
Gangware, Harold L.
Garber, Thomas M.
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Garnier, Robert B.
Garrison, E.L.
Gastaldi, Joe

Gaultierre, Vic
Gausted, Eddie
Gaudreault, G.
Genhart, Al
Geyer, John J.
Giaquinto, Frank D.
Gibbens, Roy G.
Gibbens, Sr. Roy Powell
Gibson, Norman P.
Gill Sr., Herman R.
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Gleason, George
Glenn, Paul
Gloeckner, Sidney R.
Goodman, Saul
Goodrow, Harold
Grabek, Mitchell
Graham, Joe
Gransden, Galen
Grant, Benjamin
Grasso, Sam M.
Green Jr., A.B.
Greene, Andrew
Greenwood, Elbert Lee
Greffet, Charles
Grillo, Dominico
Gross, George N.
Gulledge, Clarence T.
Gustafson, E.E.

H

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Hall, Bill
Hall, Ray T.
Hammerick, Lou
Hammond, Frank
Hancock, Leonard
Hanna Jr., Walter J.
Hannah, Mel
Hanney, Roy F.
Hardoby, John
Harris, Richard (Dick)
Harris, Robert G.
Harszy, Arthur J.
Hartman, W.W.
Hauri, John S.
Hauser, Joseph A.
Hauser, Roy E.
Head, Arthur A.
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Helbling, Joseph P.
Henley, Don
Herbst, Charles
Hicks, Joseph W.
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Hill, James W.
Hill, John W.
Hille, Edmond C.
Hilliard, John P.
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Hoag, Erwin A.
Hodges, Charles W.
Hodges, Quincy R.
Hoffman, Allen S.
Hoffman, Walter
Hogan, T.M.
Holcomb, Earl L.
Holsclaw, Samuel W.
Holder, Herman M.
Horn, Tom
Horner, Richard E.
Horner, Ronald D.
Hosher, Alan E.

Hostettler, John E.
Howard, J. Owen
Hudak, Stephen E.
Hughes, J.D.
Husett, Elmer O.
Husted Jr., John C.
Hutcheon, William

I

Ingar, Gienandt
Isenberg, M. George
Izdepski, Norbert V.

J

Jackson, Glynn S.
Jackson, Howard E.
Jasonis, Joseph J.
Jatich, William
Jerman, Charles E.
Jerman, Joseph
Johnson, Bob
Johnson, Harold J.
Johnson, Louis F.
Johnson, Martin H.
Johnson, Milt
Johnson, Neal
Johnston, Adam
Johnston, Charles K.
Jones, David M.
Jones, Rex C.
Jones, W.H.
Jones, Waldo B.

K

Kaege, L. Dale
Kantor, George
Kaplan, Joseph
Karecki, Marion R.
Karstens, E.H.
Kaufman, Dwight M.
Keating, Don
Keenan, Jack
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Kim, Edward Y.N.
Kinn, Zane
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Knapp, Gaylord A.
Knepp, Paul K.
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Kooiker, John
Kortz, Elwood A.
Kraft, Marvin A.
Krause, William
Kresslov, Russell
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Krug, W.K.
Kuhlman, T.J.

L

Landis, Eldon
Lane, Byron W.
Lane, Nelson
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LaRse, John
Larsen, Ralph W.
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Latham, Steve
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LeBar, James
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Lewis, Don
L'Heureux, Harry D.
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Lipski, Stephen
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Locke, Jennings B.
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Loney, Edward
Long, Robert E.
Lotspeich, Harold T.
Louden, James L.
Lowe, W.D.
Lowrey, Gordon M.
Lowry, Arline (Mrs.)
Luby, Earle B.
Lucas, Darrell
Lukas, Joseph
Lundberg, Edward F.
Luster, Bernard W.
Lynch, Charles

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Macauley, Ward
Machado, Joe
Maciejczyk, Andy
Macklin, Charles B.
Maier, Robert H.
Major, Stephen
Mallino, Anthony
Malmgren, Fred R.
Malone, Vincent
Mangold, John
Marion, Glen
Marks, Henry F.
Marsh, Cecil J.
Marsili, James S.
Martin Jr., C.A.
Martin, Rick
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Matsumoto, John H.
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Maxwell, Wilton B.
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Mealy, Ernest H.
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McCain, H.H.
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McCormick, Rich
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N

Nance, Howard T.
Natali, Leo A.
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Neff, John N.
Neighbors, William
Nelson, C.A.
Neuer, John J.
Newman, Herbert B.
Newyear, Edward G.
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Nightingale, George C.
Nimmo, William K.
Nims, Richard C.
Nowak Jr., Leon J.

O

Oakes, Erle
O'Brien, Dan
O'Brien, J.H.
Ockoskis, Walter C.
Olsen, Harold
Olson, Clinton
Orr, Donald E.
Orton, Frank L.
Osburn, Kenneth A.

P

Pace, James T.
Padilla, Johnnie G.
Paige, Ralph F.
Page, Roger W.
Pappin, Walter H.
Parks, Joe
Patterson, Ralph
Pavlick, Roberta A.
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Pierce, Vinton D.
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Pita, Hector
Place, Raymond C.
Pleines, Frederick
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Preston, Charles H.
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Price, Thomas J.

Price, W.J.
Prichard, Wallace E.
Puckett, D.L.
Puttkamer, Kenneth

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Quirk, Jack

R

Ragland, William D.
Raine, Russ
Ramey, Loyd
Rasmussen, Jack
Ratts, Tom
Rayl, James E.
Recht, Clyde
Redwine, James
Reed, Donald M.
Reed, Jess
Reinke, R.N.
Rettig, W.O.
Reynolds, Gordon
Reynolds, S.F.
Richmond, Carlin
Ridenour, William
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Ringer, Willard
Rizzo, Salvatore
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Robertson, Doyle
Robertson, J.B.
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Robinson, Orville
Rogers, John R.
Rogers, James
Rollins, William
Romanoski, Al
Roos, George
Rosenbaum, Charley
Ross, Billy
Roy, Arthur L.
Rudrud, A.B.
Russell, J.J.
Ruth, Frank H.
Rutledge, William B.
Ryan, Joseph M.
Ryan, Raymond L.
Ryland, Hugh
Rynyan, Davis

S

Salsbury, Harold L.
Salsbury, Kenneth L.
Sanchez, A.L.
Sanders, Levi
Sardelich, Gerald C.
Saulino, A.N.
Sault, William
Sauter, Jay
Sawyer, Wilbert L.
Scherman, George
Schilling, B.E.
Schlotfelt, Earl
Schneider, Delbert D.
Schroth, Ted A.
Scurlock, Monroe
See, Floyd Wayne
Seidel, Francis L.
Seleen, Lloyd M.
Seltzer, P.L.
Sesco Sr. Marlin
Sexton, Marion R.
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Sharp, John F.
Sharp, John R.
Shellhorn, Beldon
Shirk, Eugene R.
Shortman Jr., Robert
Silva, Arthur

Sivils, Benjamin O.
Simkins, Robert G.
Simmons, Joseph W.
Simpson, R.L.
Sisko, Andrew
Sittman, William F.
Skinner, Loyl W.
Skrupky, Harry
Slater, Eugene L.
Slusher, Robert A.
Sloan, Robert P.
Smith, Andrew W.
Smith, Arthur
Smith, B.
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Smith, Lenly
Sneed, Mrs. Violet Dee
Sopko, A.J.
Sova, Frank A.
Speckter, Martin
Sproles, Fleet W.
Stallings, George
Stanisz, John A.
Starnes, Bartley
Stransky, Howard W.
Statts, John
Stedman, Bob
Stenken, Charles
Stephens, James D.
Stepien, Ted
Sterba, Edwin J.
Stever, Thomas W.
Stilkey, Richard
Stratton, J. David
Stromquist, John J.
Stryson, Paul
Sturgis, Richard
Sullivan, Mert J.
Supplee, Laurence H.
Svoboda, Edward
Swales, William T.
Swanson, Myron
Swift, Henry A.
Swinick, Pete

T

Talbot, George I.
Tarte, B.F.
Taylor, Broadus B.
Taylor, C.A.
Taylor, C.O.
Taylor, George H.
Taylor, John
Taylor, Robert L.
Terrell, Fred
Thomas, Albert E.
Thomas, George
Thomas, Jr., Oscar
Thomas, Richard S.
Thompson, Lewis
Thompson, Ted
Thorn, Edgar W.
Thurman, Glenn
Timm, F.L.
Tolle, Donald J.
Tolle Jr., Edgar E.
Tomlinson, Albert B.
Tope, Wilbur L.
Torrez, Carmel
Towne, Gordon E.
Townsend, Jack J.
Tras Jr., Peter
Travis, Harvey

Turkaly, Bartha
Tutt, Thomas

U

Udal, August
Underwood, Howard B.
Unger, William

V

Valentine, Harold
Van Dusen, Charles M.
Vanlandingham, James M.
Veitch, Bob
Velasquez, Jimmy E.
Vieau, Leo
Viglione, Forrest
Voisard, Edward J.
Volkman, Allen C.
Vollmer, William H.

W

Wade, Kenneth S.
Wadsworth, Jerry L.
Waggoner, Oliver A.
Wagnor, Charles
Wainscott, Earl L.
Walker, Burnell
Walker, Walter L.
Walterhouse, Donald
Wargacki, Joseph
Warger, Vincent J.
Webb, Eugene
Weger, Howard O.
Weidel, Eddie E.
Weiland, George E.
Weinberg, Dick
Welch, R.L.
Wells, George W.
Wentzel, Marcus B.
Wertz, Earl H.
Westbrook, Taylor
Whelan, J.H.
White, Marshall V.
Whitlock, H.M.
Whitmer, Milton B.
Whitney, Ray
Wickizer, Wilbur
Wickrider, Marion G.
Willard, Floyd
Willard, Harry
Willemssen, Ray
Williams Jr., Ben R.
Williams, Richard
Wingo, Louis
Wirginis, Theodore J.
Withers, Clarence L.
Witt, Raymond J.
Woeltjen, Henry J.
Wojozynski, Carl
Wolback, Francis M.
Wollard, Lester
Wood, Charlie F.
Woodward, Burch
Woodward, James
Wooten, Fred
Worchel, Russell C.
Work, Julius S.

Y

Yohner, Mike R.
Yonally, Ed
Young, David E.
Young, Herbert L.
Young, W.R.
Yundt, A.J.

Z

Zell, Luke T.
Zipp, Marvin S.



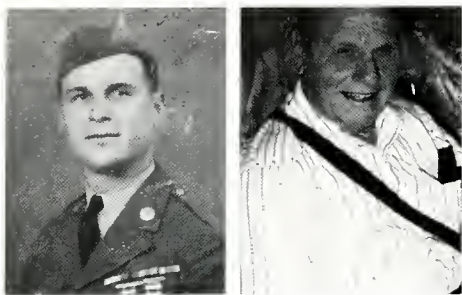
Editor's note: All members of the 47th Bomb Group Veterans Association were invited to write and submit biographies for inclusion in this publication. The following are from those who chose to participate. The biographies were printed as received, with only minor editing. The publisher regrets it cannot accept responsibility for omissions or inaccuracies within the following biographies.

47TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS BIOGRAPHIES



*Photo: G-47 Bomb Group, 10 April 1946, 86th Bomb Squadron
(Courtesy of R. A. Kiefer)*

JOHN F. ADAIR, born in Lewisville, AR on March 21, 1913. Enlisted in the USMC in June 1935 and served four years until June 1939. Three years of that time was spent protecting the greater part of Shanghai during the Chinese and Japanese war. After the war they left that part of China, returned to the States and he was discharged.



Four months later he enlisted in the USAAC and was assigned to Kelly AB. Transferred later to the 19th BG at March AB for three months (flying as a gunner) then transferred to the 34th BS, 17th BG with same job as gunner and armament. The group transferred to McChord Field, WA in 1940, a few months later was split into three groups and the 47th was formed. He was in the 86th and later assigned to HQ as the group armament inspector; when they went overseas, he was assigned to the 97th Sqdn. as armament chief until the wars end.

Discharged in 1945, a little over a year later, he enlisted in the Air Corps and was sent to Japan. Participated in the Korean War, then assigned to Castle AFB until his retirement in 1957.

On Dec. 7, 1941, he was selected to go on a mission of unknown at that time. They landed at Hamilton AB that evening and were told what their mission was. They loaded four 500-lb bombs in each plane (B-18s) and flew out of Hamilton the next morning on patrol duty looking for Japanese subs. Two weeks later they went to Sacramento, he flew out of there until released from duty, then was sent back to Fresno for other duty.

After his retirement from the USAF, he returned to Safeway, retiring after 18 years. His medals include the Bronze Star, Air Medal and Commendation Medal.

He and his wife Barbara have a daughter Tonya and two grandchildren, Bridgette and Denise.

HENRY CLAY ADERTON graduated from high school in Vandalia, MO. Worked as a farmer, for an electric company and the railroads before enlisting in the USAF at Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis, MO.

He was stationed at McChord Field, WA, and discharged April 30, 1943, as a private. He has spent his life in homes and veterans hospitals. Aderton is single.



MARION J. AKERS (AKE), born March 26, 1920, in Dows, IA. He graduated from Dows HS in 1936 and from Ellsworth Jr. College in 1938. Was a flying cadet, July 1940-March 1941 with the 95th Sqdn., 17th BG and with the 47th

BG, May 1941-November 1945 (adj. 84th Sqdn., ass't gp. ops. off., CO 97th Sqdn., gp. ops. off., CO 86th Sqdn.) and completed 125 combat missions.



November 1945-September 1946, HQ 9th AF and AF Board; September 1946-August 1949, Purdue University BS and MS aero. engineering; August 1949-April 1951 HQ, USAF, dir. physical sci. research; April 1951-August 1955, Edwards AFB, dir. ops/chief of staff; August 1955-August 1958, chief, AF Section MAAG Rome, Italy; August 1958-August 1961 National War College, student & faculty (two years); August 1961-August 1965 WPAFB, XB70 Prog.; August 1965-August 1969; ass't. DCS/proc. & prod. HQ AFSC.

Retired as colonel on Aug. 31, 1969. He was awarded the Silver Star, Legion of Merit w/cluster, Distinguished Flying Cross w/cluster, Air Medal w/7 OLCs, Commendation Ribbon w/cluster, Distinguished Unit Citation w/cluster and French Croix de Guerre w/palm.

From September 1969-December 1985 he was employed with General Electric Co. SST Program and small A/C engines. Married Myrla Williams of Goldfield, IA on June 11, 1941, at Ft. Lewis (WA) Chapel and they have three children: Alan, Gregory and Leslie Anne, and six grandchildren: Gregory Alan, Brent Michael, Scott Robert, Zachary Judson, Jessie Elisabeth and Ryan Jeffrey.

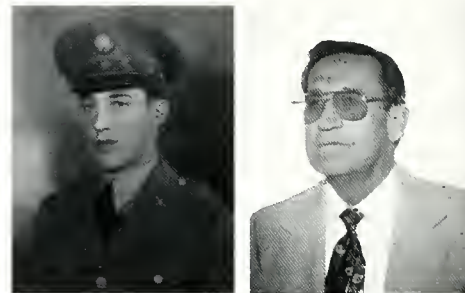
BERNIE AKOM, born Feb. 9, 1917, in Allegan, MI. Drafted in the Army on Sept. 16, 1941, he took a short discharge and enlisted in the Air Corps on Oct. 2, 1941. Sent to Keesler Field Air Corps School in December 1941, put in the 47th BG, 97th Sqdn. in Oklahoma City and stayed with them until the time of his discharge on Aug. 23, 1945, as corporal.



Worked 34 years for Michigan Cigar Co. of Big Rapids, MI. Married Betty Jane Hendershot on Feb. 11, 1946 and they have two children, Linda Akom Newberry and Ronald, and four grandchildren: Ben Newberry, Betsy Coffey, Amy and Betina Akom.

LONNIE P. ALLEN JR., born Aug. 22, 1920, in La Grange, GA. He enlisted in the USAAC on

Oct. 4, 1939, at Montgomery, AL and was assigned to the 23rd Composite Gp., 54th BS(M). The group transferred to Orlando AB, 1940, transferred to McChord Field, WA (H)BS and he was assigned to the 47th BG, 85th Sqdn., 1941 (crew chief) moved to Fresno, CA, December, moved to McClellan Field, Sacramento and flew coast patrol.



Transferred to Will Rogers Field, OK, and received A-20s; went first to Greensboro, then England, Africa, Sicily, Italy and Corsica.

Discharged in June 1945 as tech sergeant at Camp Beale, CA; his medals and awards include the ETO, Good Conduct, Freedom Medal, etc.

Worked for Pacific Tel&Tel Co. until his retirement in 1982. He married Eleanor Ward and had one son Lonnie Jr. (both are deceased), three grandsons and three great-grandsons. Married Terri Deltesta, Fresno, CA.

CHESTER AMBROSE (CHET), born in Normantown, PA on Oct. 31, 1916. He enlisted on June 13, 1941, Pittsburg, PA; was assigned to the 47th BG, 97th Sqdn. and completed air mechanics at Kelly Field, Tulsa, OK. Overseas service started in November 1942 at Casablanca, French Morocco, Tunisia, Sicily, Naples-Foggia, Rome-Arno, Southern France, North Apennines and Po Valley. After V-E Day he flew back to the States from Italy, via North Africa and Atlantic, to Belem, Brazil, thence home to Seymour Johnson Field, Goldsboro, NC.



Discharged as a tech sergeant at Seymour Johnson on Sept. 28, 1945; his awards include the American Defense Service Medal, American Theater Service Medal, EAME Service Medal w/3 Bronze Stars, Silver Star, Service Stripe, five Overseas Bars and the Soldiers Medal for aiding in extricating pilot from burning aircraft on take-off at Vesuvius Air Field in Italy.

He vividly remembers the bombing and strafing raids; the dog-fights at Thelepte (the first time in); the transport of 100 octane fuel to ground forces in France, and because all space in our ship was full of containers, the crew chief had to ride belly down on the catwalk behind the pilot. They would land, unload and go back for more.

After his discharge he graduated from

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY with a BS in architecture and spent 32 years in the architectural and engineering field (12 of those years were as a consultant to school architects and school districts).

Married Elizabeth Ann Taimuty in 1945; they have two sons, Bill and Alan, and five grandchildren: Matthew, Katherine, Jeffrey, Lindsay and Craig.

BERNARD R. ANGSTADT, a crew chief with the 86th BS, 47th BG and went to North Africa in November 1942. His aircraft was shot up many times but never shot down. Crew members were wounded, but thank God, no one ever lost his life. He remembers when the entire plexiglass nose was taken off by a shell, and the bombardier survived by holding a seat cushion in front of his face (to help him breathe while going at more than 200 miles per hour). When the aircraft taxied in and Angstadt saw the damage, he was amazed that there were no injuries. The aircraft had a badly damaged horizontal stabilizer and elevator with only the right elevator operational.



They flew 268 combat missions (one of the highest in the group) and felt that their group did more to assist the Ground Forces and save lives than any other group in that area. He received the Bronze Star.

Angstadt was sent to the Far East, Korea and other islands. He retired from SAC in 1970.

DELMAR ATCHISON, from 1942-45 was A-20 pilot with 85th BS and instructor at Morris Fld., NC, and Brazilian AF, Sao Paulo; (1945-46) Moody AFB, Myrtle Beach AFB Fly Trng. Sup.; (1946) Avn. Engr. School, School Sqdn. CO; (1946-47) separated.

(1947-53) he was with the 85th BS as ass't. adj. sqdn. ops. officer at Biggs AFB, Barksdale AFB and Langley AFB. Was commander of 4400th Bomb Crew Trng. Sqdn.; HQ 5th AF HQ (adv.) TDY 17th BG and completed 22 missions as AF liaison officer, II ROK Corps. He attended Air Cmd. and Staff College (1954); (1954-63) was member of Joint Landing Forces Board, Camp Lejeune; Pentagon staff off., Bomb Div. dir. of ops.; dir. of ops., Eielson AFB; and dir. of ops. at Reese AFB.

Retired in September 1963; his awards include the Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star, Air Medal and clusters, AF Commendation Medal, Chung Moo w/Gold Star and Command Pilot.

Owned a Baskin Robbins ice cream store, then specialty furniture stores. Retired, and now lives in Vandenberg Village, CA. Married a beautiful Canadian, Suzanne Audrey Stokes, in Sao Paulo Brazil in August 1945 and they have three children.

GEORGE C. BAGGS, born Feb. 17, 1923, Stevensville, MT, and grew up in Omaha, NE. Enlisted as aviation cadet in February 1942 and was commissioned as 2nd lieutenant with navigators rating in November 1942, Class 42-16, Hondo, TX AAFB. Joined the 84th Sqdn. at Youks Les Bains, received bombardier training by RAF flight officers as 47th BG transitioned to medium altitude operations.



Flew 51 combat missions and awarded the Air Medal and four Oak Leaves. Returned to the States in March 1944, finished WWII as instructor navigator in B-24s and achieved the rank of captain.

Married Laura Stone in Houston, TX in 1944 and blessed with daughter, two sons and three grandchildren.

Graduated Iowa State College in 1949, spent 33 years with Carrier Corp. in Dallas, Houston, New Orleans and Denver offices before retiring in Highlands Ranch, CO. Active now in volunteer work for PBS TV station, Home Owners Assoc. and the 47th BG Assoc. He enjoys lots of golfing, traveling and walking.

HAROLD W. BAKER, trained with the 47th BG and started across the North Atlantic with them; but following an abortive attempt to reach Greenland, he was left behind with a series of plane problems.

Sent back to Oklahoma and eventually flew with the 3rd Attack Group, 8th Sqdn. in New Guinea. After leaving there, he rejoined the 47th in Charlotte, NC and Valdosta, GA for the few remaining months of the war.

WILLIAM A. BALL, enlisted Dec. 29, 1942. Went to basic training at Jefferson Barracks, MO; A/E Training at Boeing School of Aero., Oakland; and joined the 47th BG in October 1942. He participated in the invasion of North Africa (November 1942) and Battle of Kasserine Pass.

Was discharged on Aug. 9, 1945, as sergeant; his awards include the EAME Theater Ribbon with eight Bronze Stars, Distinguished Unit Citation and Good Conduct Ribbon.

Served as tool and die appr. at Studebaker and worked as supervisor of maintenance at Bendix until his retirement in 1982.

His wife passed away in 1990. He has two sons, Scott and Gregg.

CHARLES W. BARR, born July 21, 1920, in Florence, AL. He graduated Coffee HS; earned BS degree from University of North Alabama; was aviation cadet, September 1942 with Class 43-E; commissioned at Blytheville, AK, AB in May 1943 and assigned to the 46th BG, Will Rogers Field, OK for A-20 training.

Left in November 1943 for overseas to 47th BG, 97th Sqdn. in Foggia, Italy. Moved to

Vesuvius, then Caserta when Vesuvius erupted. Went home to the States on 30-day leave; returned to Corsica in July 1944, back to the States in August 1944 and reassigned to Florence, SC, 127th AAF Base unit as assistant base operations officer.



Separated from service in September 1945, he earned three Air Medals. Accepted Reserve commission and stayed involved in the Reserves until retiring in 1969 as lieutenant colonel.

In 1946 he formed a store and restaurant equipment business in Florence, AL, distributing and servicing over a three state area. He was also a partner in outdoor advertising. Sold his business and retired in 1985.

Married Isabelle Archer in 1943 and has three daughters and three grandchildren. Civic activities include church, Lions Club, Salvation Army Advisory Board, Yacht & Country Club Board. Hobbies are pleasure boating, tennis, gardening and traveling.

EVERETT M. BELL, inducted into the Regular Army through the NG, Co. F, 172nd Inf., 43rd Div. from Northfield, VT. Transferred to the Air Corps on July 1 in the Air Cadet Training Program.



In November he went to Machine Gunner's School in Las Vegas, NV; joined the troops in the Mediterranean as a machine gunner; and completed 60 bombing missions. He received the Air Medal and four OLCs with the European Theater Ribbon and four Battle Stars.

Since his discharge from the Army, he worked 25 years in the insurance business and had a traveling job that covered all of New England and most of New York and New Jersey.

HUGH C. BELL, born May 6, 1924, in McCook, NE, and grew up in Shenandoah, IA. Entered the USAAF on Jan. 18, 1943; and graduated Pilot Cadet Class 44-G on Aug. 4, 1944, Mather Field, CA.

Assigned to Morris Field, NC, A-20 CCT pilot training in August 1944; to Florence AFB, SC, A-26 CCT training in December 1944; and to the 47th BG, 84th BS in Grosseto, Italy in February 1945 as A-26 pilot.

He completed 21 missions (individual night



sories) and was discharged from WWII in October 1945 as second lieutenant. Was awarded the Air Medal and two Campaign Stars for Po Valley and North Apennine Mountains.

Re-entered active duty as troop carrier pilot from January 1948 to January 1950 when discharged. Recalled to duty from March 1951 to August 1953 and was troop carrier pilot in Germany and France.

Was a funeral director for 40 years and retired in 1989. He is active in the American Legion, Department of Iowa.

DAVID W. BENSLEY, born June 16, 1918, in Alden, NY. He graduated East Aurora HS and from Harvard University in 1940; entered active duty Sept. 26, 1941, and served in the USAAF as a pilot captain of a two engine A-20 light bomber with the 47th BG.



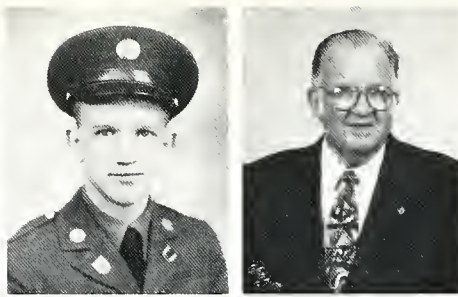
Participated in Tunisia, Sicily, Naples-Foggia Air Offensive over Europe and completed 50 missions in the North Africa Campaign.

Discharged Dec. 27, 1945; his awards include the EAME Theater Campaign Ribbon, Air Medal w/4 OLCs, Distinguished Unit Citation and American Defense Service Medal.

Married the former Edith Mumford on Jan. 14, 1944, and has four children: David Jr., Albert, Marilyn and Robert, and eight grandchildren: Kimberly, Wendy, Timothy, Susan, Jennifer, Evelyn, Thomas and Chelsea. Retired from M&T Bank in 1979 after 32 years. Bensley passed away Dec. 22, 1993.

ROBERT S. BERG (BOB), born Aug. 18, 1922, in Minneapolis, MN. He graduated West HS in June 1940 and enlisted in Btry. G, 215th CA (AA) NG on July 5, 1940. Federalized Jan. 6, 1941, the unit was sent to Camp Haan, CA. Across the road from March AB, he saw his first A-20 and B-19. In August the unit was sent to Kodiak, AK to give aerial defense for the naval air station under construction.

He heard about the Sergeant Pilot Program, applied and entered Class 42-I at Santa Maria, CA, and was there at the time of the Tokyo Raid. Memorable experience was when Wrong Way Corrigan ate lunch with them. He graduated Sept. 29, 1942, at Stockton, CA.



Assigned to the 46th BG at Oklahoma City and flew to North Africa by way of South Atlantic. He joined the 47th BG at Souk El Arba; was assigned to the 84th Sqdn. and had 15 missions before he was 21. He flew 53 missions, the last at Anzio.

Returned to the States and was assigned to combat crew training center at Florence, SC. Six months later he transferred to Air Transport Command (Ferrying Div.) at Kansas City, KS and spent his last year in service ferrying primarily A-26s and B-25s.

Separated from the service on Nov. 1, 1945; attended the University of Minnesota; worked for Minneapolis Moline; then hired on with United Airlines in February 1952 and retired in August 1982.

Married Ardis Rime on Sept. 20, 1952. They have two daughters, Barbara and Patrice, and two grandchildren, Erik and Samantha.

ANTHONY E. BIANCARDI, born Jan. 30, 1916, Mt. Pleasant, PA. Enlisted in the USAAC on July 5, 1941. He went to boot camp at Hamilton Field, San Francisco, CA; was assigned to the 86th BS, 47th BG in September 1941, serving in communications; and was stationed at Will Rogers Field, OK; Langley Field, VA and Ft. Dix, NJ.



Overseas he participated in the invasion of North Africa; battles at Rabat, Morocco, Casablanca and Youks Les Baines, Algeria. He was in the Italian campaign to the end, made short stops in Corsica and Marseilles, France to the end of European War.

Memorable experiences: tornado in Oklahoma City in 1942; eruption of Mt. Vesuvius and evacuation to Naples in 1944; and the air attacks shortly after their arrival in Cappadocia.

He was discharged in October 1945 as tech sergeant, communications chief. Attended Penn State College and graduated with MD from Med. School in Philadelphia, PA. Married in 1951, widowed in 1988 and married a widow in 1989. He has three children: Anthony, Maria and Steven, and three grandchildren: Jeffrey, Teresa and Paul.

JOSEPH T. BITZKO, born Sept. 25, 1921. He enlisted Aug. 17, 1942; was assigned to the

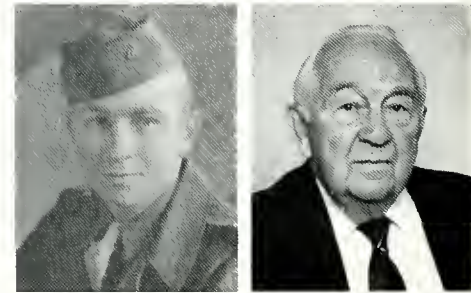
47th BG, 86th Sqdn. and served in Italy, Corsica and South France from June 1944-July 1945. He completed 68 missions as squadron navigator/bombardier/officer.

Active Reserves from 1945-51; active duty 1951-70 as clinical pathologist, USAF hospitals. Discharged as lieutenant colonel in 1970. Received the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with 3/OLCs, ETO Medal w/5 Battle Stars, AF Commendation with clusters and others.

Earned BS and MS from University of Pittsburgh, PA, and teaching certificate from University of Dayton in 1973. He taught high school in the Dayton area, 1973-76; was director of Freshman Chem Labs, Wright State University, 1977-92, recipient of President's Award of Excellence, WSU, 1990, and retired in 1992.

Married Irene and they have daughter Donna Marie.

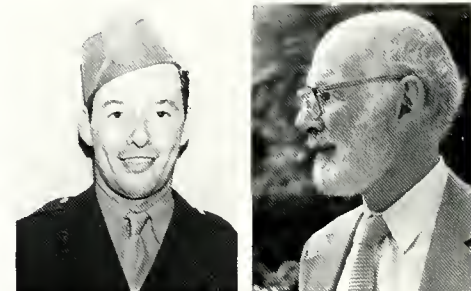
HAROLD E. BLAESSING, born Nov. 12, 1916, Petersburg, MI. He entered the USAAC in May 1942 and was assigned to the 97th Sqdn., 47th BG in 1942. He achieved rank of corporal and earned the EAME Theater Ribbon w/7 Bronze Stars, Good Conduct Ribbon and Distinguished Unit Citation. Served as auto mechanic for 30 months until his discharge Sept. 16, 1945.



Married Betty on Dec. 31, 1941, and shared 39 years of marriage until her death in 1980. He has four children, 10 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Worked 30 years as maintenance pipe fitter for Doohler/Jarvis Die-Casting Corp., Toledo, OH. Retired in 1976, he enjoys daily walks, bowling, dart ball, golf and grandkids. He is an active member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, VFW member 22 years, Erie, MI.

WILLIAM P. BOIZELLE (BILL), born Nov. 25, 1916, New Orleans, LA. Enlisted in the USAC on Oct. 28, 1940, 30th Observation Sqdn. He was assigned to the 47th BG, 84th Sqdn. in October 1942 as photographer.



Discharged on Aug. 22, 1945, he published the 47th BG photo album following the war. Manufacturer from 1946-54 and co-owner of Boizelle & Boizelle Ins. Agency from 1955 to present time.

He married Evangeline Little on April 19, 1942, and they have two children and six grandchildren.

JACK HAROLD BOTTS, born Nov. 5, 1918, in Liberal, KS. Enlisted in the USAAC on May 16, 1941, and was stationed at Hamilton Field, Fresno, Lowry Field, Will Rogers Field and Gunnery School in Las Vegas.



Served with the 47th BG in Tunisia, Sicily, Naples and Foggia. Flew his first mission on Jan. 22, 1943, and his 54th and last mission on Jan. 20, 1944. Returned to the States in February 1944, served in training command and attended B-25 School.

Wounded in action in North Africa and received the Purple Heart. Other awards include the Good Conduct, American Defense Service, EAME, Silver Star and Air Medal w/2 OLCs. Separated July 14, 1945, at Ft. MacArthur, CA as staff sergeant.

Married since Dec. 27, 1947, and has three daughters, four granddaughters, one grandson, one great-granddaughter and three great-grandsons.

EUGENE B. BOWARD, born March 2, 1921, in Leitersburg, MD. He joined the military on Sept. 3, 1942, and was assigned to 86th Sqdn., 47th BG, 12th AF as photo-gunner on daylight and night intruder missions in A-20 light bomber from bases in Italy, Corsica and Southern France.

Shot down on his 51st mission over the Apennine Mountains of northern Italy on Nov. 12, 1944, while participating in night-intruder (single aircraft) mission to destroy a German pontoon bridge across the Po River. He parachuted, joined the Italian Partisans and evaded southward through the US 5th Army front lines, Nov. 20, 1944, in the company of two other crew members, Lt. Dowdell and S/Sgt. Schultz, Partisans, escaped POWs, other Allied evadees and six or eight German soldier defectors. He was discharged Oct. 25, 1945.

Was civilian engineer with US Army and retired in 1986. He lives with his wife Sue in Springfield, VA. Son Gary is a captain in the US Army.

DONALD L. BOWDEN enlisted at Ft. Bliss, TX on Dec. 30, 1941. In January 1942 he was sent to Will Rogers Field, OK, where he received basic training in the Air Corps Ord. Assigned to the 86th Sqdn., 47th BG and in July 1942 went with the group to Greensboro, NC for Carolina maneuvers.

On Oct. 17, 1942, he boarded a train for Ft. Dix, NJ; Nov. 1, 1942 they loaded on the ship *Santa Rosa* and set sail for Africa, landing on November 19 in Casablanca.

Participated in the African Campaign, ended

up in Tunis; went to Sicily, then to Italy, Corsica and back to Italy. Granted a terminal leave in February 1945, he returned to the States and was married, then back to Italy on May 9, 1945.



Left Leghorn on June 25, arrived Stateside on July 12, 1945, and mustered out of the Army on Aug. 22, 1945, at Ft. Bragg, NC.

CLARENCE N. BOWEN, born in 1908 in Pittsfield, VA. Attended schools in Vermont, Florida and California. He was 2nd lieutenant in Infantry Reserves on Aug. 19, 1936; had short periods of active duty from 1937-40; and was assigned to the 17th BG(L) on Nov. 10, 1940.



Assigned May 13, 1941, to 47th BG(L) and served as group adjutant and group XO during WWII. From November 1942 to May 1945, he participated in 10 campaigns and 11 combat missions in Algeria-French Morocco, Tunisia, Sicily, Naples-Foggia, Anzio, Rome-Arno, Southern France, North Apennines and the Po Valley.

Post War: HQ Continental Air Forces; HQ SAC; Cmd. and Gen Staff College; Pentagon, Chief, Personnel Groups I and VI; Germany, Chief Personnel Ops. Div.; and Pentagon, Chief, Personnel Spec. Actions Branch.

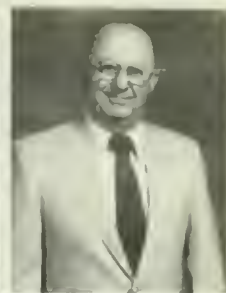
Col. Bowen retired in 1960 and moved to Carmel, CA. Awards include the Bronze Star Medal, Air Medal, AF Commendation Medal, Presidential Unit Citation w/cluster, American Defense Service Medal, American Campaign Medal w/star, EAME Campaign Medal w/9 stars, WWII Victory Medal, Army of Occupation Medal w/Germany Clasp, National Defense Service Medal, AF Longevity Service Award w/4 clusters and the Armed Forces Reserve Medal with HG Device.

He married Frances Costello on June 9, 1934.

EDWARD J. BOYAJIAN, born Bridgewater, MA on March 16, 1915. Moved to Fresno, CA in 1920 and graduated from Clovis HS in 1933. He joined the Air Corps on Jan. 10, 1942, went to basic at Sheppard Field, TX, and was later assigned to the 97th as a replacement.

He landed on the beach at Casablanca in

November 1942 and was involved in all the campaigns until the end of the European War. Flew home on A-26 crewed by Sgt. Shelhorn as a radioman and discharged as a staff sergeant in September 1945.



Married Helen in 1950 and they have two sons and two grandchildren. He retired in 1972.

JUNIOR THEODORE BRADEN, born Feb. 24, 1919, Davenport, IA. Started flying CPT flight scholarship in 1939 and passed flying cadet mental exam in 1940; assigned to 42-B, February 1941, Stockton, CA; Pendleton, OR (B-17s), February-March 1942; Oklahoma City, 84th Sqdn., 47th BG (A-20s) until maneuvers in Greensboro, NC, July-September 1942.



Flew the North Atlantic route to England, October-December 1942; North Africa, Jan. 15, 1943; rejoined 47th Group on Jan. 26, 1943, and flew 42 missions in North Africa, Malta and Sicily.

Returned to States in September 1943, assigned to Florence AFB, SC and instructed A-20s and B-25s RTU checked out in A-26B November 1943; assigned to Valdosta, GA, AFB, May 1945, RTU and went on inactive duty in September 1945.

Employed with Bendix Products engineering in nosegear steering and 10 years engineering, Torrington Bearings, he retired in September 1983.

Married in South Bend, IN to Ruth Zimmerman, March 29, 1942; they have three children: Terry, John and Barbara, and two grandchildren, Christopher and Jennifer. They live in South Bend, IN and spend the winter months in Florida or Arizona.

GILBERT R. BRAUER (GIL), born Feb. 4, 1921, in Cheyenne County, Sidney, NE. He graduated Eustis HS in 1938 and enlisted in the USAAC in January 1941. Honor graduate of Sparton School of Aeronautics, Tulsa, OK, he joined the 47th BG, 84th Sqdn. in September 1941 at Fresno, CA as crew chief.

Left for overseas with the advanced echelon in September 1942 to England and later with entire group in North Africa, etc. until May 1945. Returned to Stateside and assigned to B-



29s at Biggs Field, TX. Left the AF in October 1945.

Married Doris Kostbahn at Lexington, NE, and has two children, Brad and Pat.

Worked for automobile dealerships, then taught school five years and completed 25 years with technical community college administration, student services and alumni work. Retired in 1991.

Enjoys RVing, working with Senior Citizens, VFW and visiting his seven grandchildren in Illinois and Colorado.

TROY D. BRENDER, enlisted April 22, 1941, and assigned to the 84th Sqdn., 47th BG in Fresno (1941). He participated in the North African Campaign, Malta, Sicily, Italy, Corsica and Southern France.

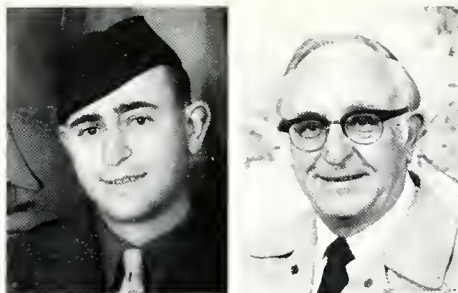


One of his most harrowing experiences was on a A-26(L) bomber being ferried back to the States in June 1945 by a pilot, crewchief and Brender as a mechanic. The oil pressure on the right engine failed and Lt. Crandell feathered the engine and headed back to Puerto Rico. The plane "leveled off" at 2,400 feet at 180 miles an hour with fully loaded fuel tanks; but they made it!

Sgt. Brender was discharged Sept. 24, 1945. Memorable experience was revisiting Sicily and Italy in 1989 with the 47th BG tour. At one of the 47th BG's reunions Col. Terrell made the gallant remark that "The most important thing of the whole war was that he brought the most men home alive."

Married Lucille Hoffman in 1948. They have three children: Daryl, Dennis and Shelly, and four grandchildren: Scott, Ty, Mandy and Valerie.

FRANK C. BROEG, born Nov. 18, 1918. Enlisted Jan. 21, 1941, in the USAAC, Ft. Des Moines, IA; graduated from Spartan A&E Mechanics School; and was assigned to the 85th Sqdn., 47th BG. Graduated from Chanute Field, Instrument School on Dec. 10, 1941; promoted to 2nd AM mechanics rating and re-assigned to 85th Sqdn. at Fresno, CA, and was responsible for all aircraft instrument maintenance.



Discharged Oct. 30, 1945, at Sioux City AB with the rank of tech sergeant.

He worked as design and QC engineer on Bomarc and Spartan Missile; as QC engineer on Apollo reaction rocket controls; and was employed 19 years with Marquardt Aircraft, three years with Thiokol Chemical in Huntsville, AL, and three years with McDonnell-Douglas.

Memorable experience was viewing Mt. St. Helen's eruption in May 1980.

Married July 6, 1948, to Gloria Jean Johnson. They have three children: Mark, Gail Broeg Wood and Sharon Broeg Duffy, and eight Wood grandchildren and three Duffy grandchildren.

THEODORE H. BROMAN (TED), born July 1919, in Duluth, MN. Two plus years at University of Minnesota; flying cadet in May 1941; Class 42-A January 1942; UAL Boeing School of Aeronautics, Reno, NV, February 1942; and was assigned to the 47th BG, 84th Sqdn. from March 1942 to November 1943.



Awards include the Silver Star, Air Medal w/6 OLCs, Purple Heart w/OLC, RTU's Charlotte, NC and Columbia, SC, January 1944-July 1945.

Pilot with American Airlines from July 1945-July 1948. He was recalled to A/D in July 1948 and was with the USAF Air Weather Service until July 1954. He was student at USAF Inst. of Tech. from August 1954 to August 1956 and received BSEE. At NORAD/Air Def. Cmd. from September 1956 to July 1963 and program manager at USAF Systems Command, August 1963-August 1965. Col. Broman retired in August 1965.

He was engineer at Ford Aerospace Corp. from August 1965 to December 1980. Married Carmen Lundblad in 1941, she passed away in 1971. He has four children and 10 grandchildren. In 1973 he married Jean Beaman and has two step-children and two step-grandchildren.

BRUCE B. BROOKS, born about 1922 and grew up in Iowa. He enlisted in the USAAC as aviation cadet in early 1942. Received his pilot wings and 2nd lieutenant commission in late 1942.

After checking out and training, he flew an A-20 across the Atlantic to Africa. He joined the 84th Sqdn. of the 47th BG in Tunisia and flew several combat missions over Sicily and Italy. He crashed after a mission north of Naples, Italy on Oct.

16, 1943, and is listed as KIA.



JAMES R. CAIN, assigned to the 20th Recon. Sqdn., 47th BS in August 1941. He was discharged on Sept. 22, 1945, with the rank of tech sergeant and awarded the Silver Star.



Employed by Standard Oil of California from 1945-1950, he was recalled to active duty in September 1950. Retired from the USAF on Jan. 31, 1973.

His memorable experience was the beach landing with 13 other 97th BS personnel at Mahdia Plage, Morocco on Nov. 8, 1943.

He and his wife Betty have three children: Jeanne, Robert and Linda; and four grandchildren: Amy, Carey, Jessica and Joshua.

ROBERT M. CARTER entered the service at Ft. McArthur, CA, in May 1942. Was sent to AM School at Sheppard Field, TX; Gunnery School, Ft Myers, FL; and assigned to A-20 crew at Will Rogers Field, OK. Assigned to the 86th Sqdn., 47th BG in January 1943 at Youks Les Bains, Algeria and finished his required missions at Troia, Italy.



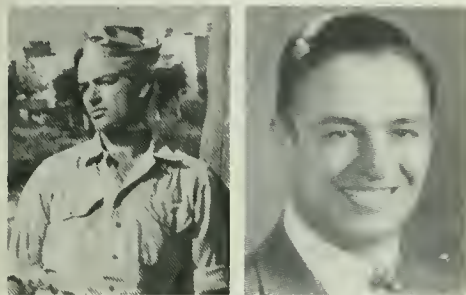
Assigned to Galveston AAFB, TX as instructor of weight and balance and cruise control in B-17s and B-24s; IIU went to Colorado Springs, Peterson Field, until war ends. Assigned to the 58th BW, March Field, CA; and 8th AF HQ, Carswell AFB, TX; HQ 5th AD, Rabat Morocco.

Retired at Offutt AFB, Omaha, NE, as an E-8 NCOIC Quality Control 3902 ABW on July 31, 1963.

Married Johnnie Marie Guinn in Galveston, TX, and they have six daughters and two sons:

Rae Ann, Robert, Lynn, Patricia, Richard, Carol, Phyllis and Jo; and 13 grandchildren. He is in the real estate and insurance business.

COSTA CHALAS, born in Sparta, Greece and came to the US (Boston) in 1926 with his mother. Graduated from Boston Latin School in 1936 and from Boston University in 1941. Upon graduation he applied for aviation cadet training in Parks Air College, East St. Louis, MO.



Discharged in December 1941, he re-enlisted in Los Angeles, joined the 47th BG in Fresno, CA, and discharged on Aug. 14, 1945.

Memorable Experiences: having Amelia Earhart as a guidance teacher; Leonard Bernstein as a classmate at Boston Latin School; and Dr. Harold Edgerton, inventor of the high powered repeatable flash unit (the strobe), was a very good friend and they traveled together several times.

His first job was with TWA, then spent 10 years with Pan American. Went in the travel business and presently owns Rainbow Travel.

Married Cathie in 1942 and they have three children and three grandchildren.

AL CHALEK enlisted in the service in January 1942. Stations included Maxwell Field; Craig Field, Blytheville, AR; Keesler; Biloxi; Lockbourne AB, Ohio; Will Rogers, Oklahoma City, OK; and Charlotte, NC. At Vesuvius, Italy he was assigned to the 84th Sqdn. and flew 51 missions as a gunner and 10 missions as an enlisted bombardier.



His memorable experiences were flying 10 missions as a bombardier and being terminated because of influx of newly commissioned bombardiers from the US in preparation of their part in the Southern France D-day.

Discharged in September 1945 as staff sergeant. He was awarded the Air Medal and cluster.

He worked as food chain executive in the New York tri-state area. Married Goldie and they have three children: Richard, David and Jon; and four grandchildren: Jessica, Evan, Matthew and Lauren.

ROBERT T. COALE, born on March 21, 1924, in Majestic, AL. He enlisted in the USAAC

in October 1942; attended A&E School; a short tour at basic flying school and volunteered for Flexible Gunnery School. Assigned to A-20 RTU at Florence, SC and Charlotte, SC, and after completion was assigned to the 97th BS in March 1944.



Flew 60 combat missions over Italy and France and returned to the US in February 1945. He participated in battles and campaigns in South France, Rome-Arno, Naples-Foggia and North Apennines. His other assignments were Ladd AFB, AK; Lowry AFB, CO; Thule Greenland; and Craig AFB, AL. Duties included flight engineer, flight chief, aircraft maintenance administration and 1st sergeant.

Retired with 20 years of service in August 1963. He was awarded the Air Medal with three OLCs, EAME Ribbon, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Air Force Longevity Service Award and Air Force Outstanding Award.

Coale was employed for over 20 years by the local school system of Selma, AL, as director of pupil transportation and building maintenance. He married Louise Wales in May 1945 and they have two children and five grandchildren.

GASTON COBLENTZ, enlisted in February 1941 and was stationed at Camp Stewart, GA and USAAF training camps and air bases in North Africa, Malta, Sicily, Italy and Corsica.

He flew 97 combat missions as an A-20 pilot and was discharged in 1945 with the rank of major. His awards include the Distinguished Flying Cross, French Croix de Guerre with Bronze Star and Distinguished Service Award.

Civilian Activity: foreign correspondent for *New York Herald and Tribune*, 1946-63; director, Mitchell Hutchins & Co., Inc., stockbrokers and director, 1963-77; Paine Webber Mitchell Hutchins, 1977-79; Sigma Delta Chi, Professional Journalism Society for Foreign Correspondents (1961) and gold exploration activity including financing.

Married Zanbida and has two children, Andrea Creaser and Marina Coblentz, and two grandchildren, Lorraine and Alistair Creaser.

WALTER E. COLLIER enlisted in the service on June 6, 1943, and served as aviation cadet, radio operator, mechanic, communications officer, master navigator, administrative contracting officer and assistant professor, ROTC, Georgia Tech.

Accomplishments/Memorable Experiences: Aircraft observer bombardment, 85th BS, 47th BW, 1953-1957; trustee of Kendall Methodist Church; co-founder of Eastern Airlines Retirees Assoc.; director, Greater Miami Aviation Assoc.; vice president of programs, TROA, AFA and member of the American Air Museum Great Brit-



ain and listed in *Who's Who in Aviation and Aerospace*.

Discharged on March 31, 1968, with the rank of major. His awards include the WWII Service Medal, American Service Medal, WWII Victory Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Korean Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal and Air Force Commendation Medal.

Graduated with BA from the University of Miami; LL.B. and LL.M. from Atlanta Law School; certificate from Cambridge University; purchasing contracting officer, Eastern Air Lines (retired) and president of Aviation Support Associates (retired).

Married Nancy Lewis Collier and they have four children: Walter E. Jr., Greg, Scott and Courtney; and 13 grandchildren: Lizette, Lara, Walter E. III, Sara, Greg Jr., Casey, Brady, Courtney Jr., Clay, Aubrey, Tarah, Andrew and Alexas; and one great-grandchild, Ashton Phillip Collier McKinney.

ROBERT C. COLLINS, after Aerial Torpedo School in Newport, RI, he was assigned to the 47th BG in Greensboro, NC. Planes were leaving for England and the ground personnel assigned to the planes, sailed for England on the *Queen Mary*.

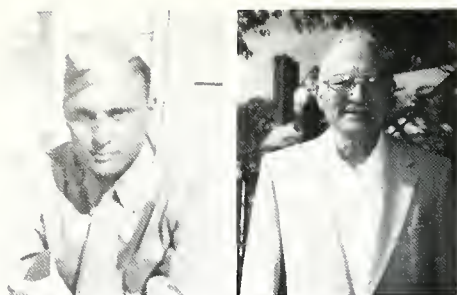


Assigned to be port officer for the balance of the ground personnel at Staten Island, NY. Upon his arrival he found that all of their ground equipment had been sent to England.

Two weeks later he was joined by the rest of the group and they left the States; but instead of going to England, they disembarked at Casablanca, Morocco, and by borrowing trucks they arrived at their airfield 65 miles south. Subsequently, their planes arrived.

JOHN W. COMA, born Dec. 27, 1919, in San Francisco, CA. He enlisted in the USAAC in June 1941; was assigned to the 47th BG, 20th Recon. Sqdn. in July 1941 and to the 97th Sqdn. in January 1942. He served flight patrol duty over the Pacific Ocean on Dec. 7, 1941, from Fresno, CA.

Ordered overseas to England in September 1942 and served as radio operator and mechanic. His greatest experiences were serving in the European Operations at Thelepte, Africa-Kasserine



Pass Operation; the invasion of Sicily at Gela Beach; and the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in Italy, which destroyed their camp.

From Italy he returned to the States and was discharged on June 15, 1945, from Ft. Dix with the rank of staff sergeant.

Graduate of Spartan Air College, Tulsa, OK with a radio engineer degree, he worked with the US Government in civil service in the Air Force and Army Aviation Div. as quality control inspector of electronic aircraft equipment.

Married Anne Takach in November 1949 in Jessup, PA, and they have four children and six grandchildren. He is active with youth sports and coaching.

MILTON J. CORWIN, joined the Aviation Cadet Corps in Los Angeles, CA, in 1942 while a student at UCLA. He entered active service in February 1943 and was stationed at Buckley Field, CO; Grand Forks, ND, with a college training detachment; Santa Ana, CA, for classification. His first choice was to be a pilot, but was told that he was a quarter of an inch too short, so opted for bombardier training and has never regretted it.

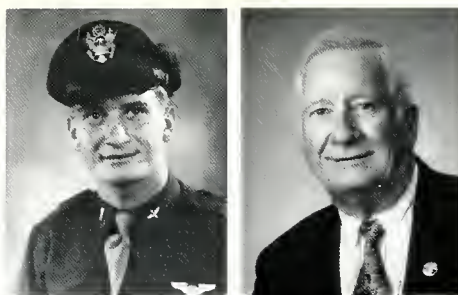


Bombardier training was at Victorville Army AB (now George AB) and graduated in November 1943, Class of 43-16; transferred to Lake Charles, LA and joined a B-26 Martin Marauder OTU. In June 1944 he was sent on a troop ship headed for North Africa and assigned to the 320th BG on the island of Sardinia. After five missions as a toggeler, he was transferred with 19 others to the 47th BG on the island of Corsica. The targets were primarily German transportation facilities in Southern France and Northern Italy.

Corwin completed 57 night missions for a total of 62. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal with two OLCs.

In civilian life he pursued a business career and is now retired. He and his wife, Shirley, live in Beverly Hills, CA, and have two daughters, Janet and Karen; and one grandson Gary Cohen.

ROBERT C. DAMEN, born April 28, 1924, in Cincinnati, OH. He enlisted in the USAAC in December 1942; became an aviation cadet (pilot training) in 1943; and graduated as 2nd lieutenant in Class 44-F. After A-20 RTU he was assigned to the 86th BS in January 1945.



Damen flew 19 missions, returned to the States in July 1945 and remained in the service flying tankers, troop carrier transports. He also had communications, electronics and command assignments in Germany, Japan, England and Turkey. Col. Damen retired with over 30 years of service in July 1973.

For eight years he managed a Rockwell International field service engineering unit supporting products used by the USAF. He married Ruth Creekmore in October 1945 and they have one son and two grandchildren. With wife and son he established Mercury Ambulance Service in Lexington, KY, in 1983 and sold the highly successful company in 1994.

HARRY E. DAVENPORT, born Dec. 15, 1919, in White Haven, PA. Joined the USAAC in May 1939; attended Air Mechanics School; instrument specialist, armament and bomb sight schools. Returned to CONUS in February 1942.



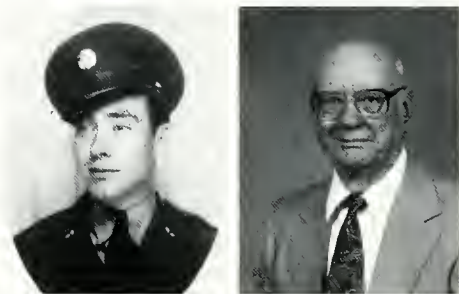
Graduated from Stockton Field, CA and Will Rogers Field, OK and ferried an A-20 to North Africa where he joined the 47th BG and flew 50 combat sorties.

Assigned to 46th BG, Morris Field, NC; took transition training in the A-26 at Florence, SC; and transferred to Wright Field, OH. In 1949 transferred to Tachikawa, Japan and received credit for 11 combat missions in Korea. Returned to CONUS in 1951; assigned to HQ OCAMA, Tinker AFB, OK; and in 1955 to Don Muang RTAFB, Bangkok, Thailand. Attended AC&SS, Maxwell AFB; assigned to HQ 2AF, Barksdale AFB; completed KC-135 combat crew training at Castle and Walker AFBs; assigned as chief of maintenance, 34 AREFS, Offutt AFB in October 1962. Reassigned as War Plans Officer, Logistics Div., HQ SAC in April 1965. Completed two-year Air War College Seminar Program, transferred as chief of maintenance, 432 TRW, Udorn, Thailand (June 1967). Returned to CONUS in 1968 as Director of Logistic Plans, HQ 15th AF, March AFB; and retired from the USAF on Aug. 1, 1969 and established residence in Bellevue, WA, with his wife Elnora.

Medals include the Bronze Star, Good Con-

duct, AF Meritorious Service, Air Defense Service, AP Service Medal, WWII Victory, Occupation, Korean Service, UN Service, AF Reserve, North American Defense Service and Air (4 OLCs) Medals, plus ribbons and awards.

CLAUDE R. DAVIS, born on Sept. 11, 1916, at Leola, AR; graduated from Sheridan HS; and attended Little Rock Junior College. He enlisted in the USAAC in 1941, completed basic training at McCord AB, Tacoma, WA, and Airplane Mechanic School in Los Angeles, CA. He was assigned to the 85th Sqdn., 47th BG.



Between 1942 and 1945 he was stationed in numerous locations including parts of North Africa, Italy and France.

Discharged in 1945 with the rank of crew chief, he returned to Malvern, AR. In 1947 he established Davis Motor Co. and was involved in real estate. Married, his wife passed away in 1971. He has three children. Remarried in 1973 to JoElla Bennett Davis and has two step-sons and 10 grandchildren. They currently reside in Malvern, AR, where he is still active in the real estate business.

ROLAND EUGENE DEATON SR. (ROL), born June 2, 1919, in Mountain Home, ID. He enlisted on April 26, 1941; graduated pilot training on Dec. 11, 1941; and participated in action at Tunisia, Libya, Sicily, Italy and ETO.



He served as IP at Moody AFB, GA; executive officer, 51st Fighter Sqdn. (F-102s), Naha AFB, Okinawa; director of procurement, Tyndall AFB, FL and Richards-Gebaur AFB, MO. Active pilot throughout his career, he attained command pilot rating with over 5,500 hours.

Retired as lieutenant colonel, his medals include the Air Medal w/4 clusters (55 missions), AF Commendation, American Defense Service, American Campaign, EAME Campaign, WWII Victory, National Defense Service w/Service Star, AF Longevity w/4 clusters and Armed Forces Reserve w/Hour Glass

Married Frances Blanchard on July 14, 1942, and has two sons, three daughters and nine grandchildren. He lives in Kansas City, MO, and is active in Boy Scouts, Optimist Clubs (president) and Shriner (33rd Degree Mason).

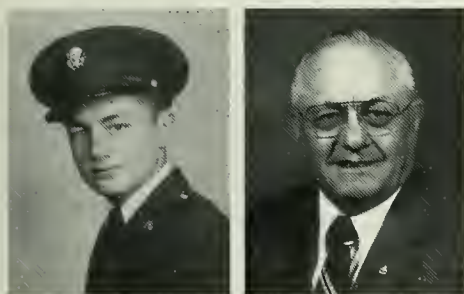
JOHN J. DILLON, born March 18, 1923, in Greeley, NE, where he attended high school. He enlisted in the USAAF on July 14, 1941, and attended Armament School at Lowry Field, CO, from August to December 1941. Joined the 85th Sqdn. from January 1942-September 1945 and departed Seymour-Johnson Field, NC, for Seattle, WA. He was discharge as staff sergeant.



Entered Creighton University, graduated in January 1950 and joined the Reserves as 2nd lieutenant in Supply. Was employed at Mutual of Omaha in the Underwriting Department in January 1950 and recalled to active duty in March 1951. He went to Finance School at Ft. Ben Harrison, IN, and AF University. He was assigned to Camp Kilmer as deputy finance officer to Capt. Roy Scott, former operations officer of the 85th Sqdn. at Oklahoma City. He had the shortest Korean tour in the USAF (three weeks with a fighter bomber group) then was returned for RIF.

Rejoined Mutual of Omaha in October 1953 and retired in October 1987 after 37 years of service. Married Cleo Johnson at Smithfield, NC, in 1945 and they have two children, Nancy and John Jr.

LEWIS N. DILLON (LEW), born Feb. 18, 1922, at Union, IA. He enlisted on Jan. 21, 1941, at Ft. Des Moines, IA; attended basic training at Jefferson Barracks, MO; and mechanics training at Spartan School of Aeronautics, Tulsa, OK.



Assigned to the 47th BG, 84th Sqdn. as crew chief in September 1941, he served at Fresno, CA; Oklahoma City, OK; Greensborough-Highpoint, NC; England (sailed on *Queen Mary*); North Africa; Malta; Sicily; Italy; and Corsica where he was assigned to the 57th BW HQ as line chief. Corsica and Italy.

Returned to the States in April 1945 and was discharged on July 1, 1945, as tech sergeant. His memorable experience was being part of a team that stopped Rommel at Kasserine Pass; also memorable, was flying test hops for American Airlines.

He joined American Airlines on Sept. 12, 1951, and worked in various positions from mechanic to manager of Maintenance and Operations Center and was based in various cities in the US until retiring on March 1, 1983.

Married Vernal Moran on July 15, 1945, and they have four children: Julia, Lewis II, Nancy and Cynthia; 14 grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. He enjoys church and related activities, travel, golf and outdoor sports.

ORLANDO Q. DI MARIA (DEE), born Sept. 6, 1918, in Greensburg, PA. He spent his entire military career from boot camp to discharge with the 47th BG.



After discharge he graduated from Penn State with a BA degree in journalism. From 1948-50 he worked for the *Madera (CA) Tribune*, then joined Dow Jones as advertising manager for the *Wall Street Journal* and as a designer and starter of the *National Observer*.

After retirement from Dow Jones, he published financial newsletters on oceanography, pollution technology and new medical technology.

Listed in Marquis' *Who's Who in the East; in the West; and in Who's Who in Commerce and Industry; and Who's Who in the World*.

Di Maria married Betty Miller and they have two children, David and Betsy; and one grandchild Kelly Flynn. His hobbies are golf, oil painting and cooking.

PERRY DOTY entered the service at Shreveport, LA. Mobilized with the 204th CA (AA), LANG on Jan. 7, 1941, he served at Camp Hulen, TX.



Discharged from the NG, he re-enlisted in the USAAC and was assigned to Lowry Field for training as an airplane armorer. He joined the 85th BS at Fresno, CA, in January 1942 and after graduation from Airplane Armorer School, he remained with the squadron until his discharge in 1945.

He participated in the invasion of North Africa landing at Port Lyautey and Casablanca, Morocco. Also served in Tunisia, Algeria, Malta, Sicily, Corsica, Southern France and Italy.

Discharged at Hattiesburg, MS in 1945 with the rank of staff sergeant. He was awarded the Silver Star while serving in Telephe, Tunisia.

Returned to Shreveport, LA and appointed 2nd lieutenant in the USAFR; promoted to 1st lieutenant and recalled to active duty during the

Korean War; and served in the States and Labrador from 1951-56.

CLAYTON C. DOVEY, JR. (CLAYT), born July 28, 1924, in Johnstown, PA. He enlisted in the USAAC in February 1943; graduated as a bombardier, 2nd lieutenant in April 1944 at Midland AFB, Class of 44-5; and assigned to the 348th Sqdn., 99th (H)BG, 15th AF in Foggia, Italy. He flew 15 combat missions over Germany and Austria from Sept. 2-Oct. 14, 1944



Transferred on Oct. 16, 1944, to the 12th AF, 85th Sqdn., 47th BG(L) at Rosignana, Italy, and flew 60 single sortie night intruder (interdiction) missions in an A-20 and A-26 aircraft. Flew a total of 75 combat missions overall, 15 in February, March and April 1945 were with the 47th Group's deputy commander, Lt. Col. Reginald Clizbe, as his bombardier and navigator.

Volunteered and overflew the normal tour of duty of 60 missions by 15 sorties to assist in the April 1945 Po Valley offensive. He was promoted to 1st lieutenant in February 1945 and was the recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross. Returned to the States in May 1945 and was honorably discharged on Oct. 9, 1945.

Dovey married Adele Podolka in October 1946; they have two children, Clayt III and Laurie Lee. He graduated from Gettysburg College in June 1948, Magna Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kapa and has had careers in industry, finance and commerce. From 1970-85 was president and CEO of Dale National Bank, Johnstown; presently chairman of the board, Cenwest National Bank, Johnstown; board member of First Commonwealth Financial Corp. (NYSE), Indiana, PA. His recreational interests are principally afield. Co-producer with his wife of television productions for *Clayt and Adele Dovey Outdoors*. He is active in numerous civic activities.

JAMES J. DUFFY (JIM), born Sept. 8, 1919, at Duluth, MN. Moved to Spokane, WA in 1939; spent two years at Duluth Jr. College; and two years at Washington State. Enlisted as a flying cadet on July 14, 1941; graduated Class 42-B at Luke Field, Phoenix, AZ. He was assigned to the 301st BG (B-17) in Spokane, WA, then assigned to the 84th Sqdn., 47th BG at Will



Rogers Field, Oklahoma City, OK, in March 1942.

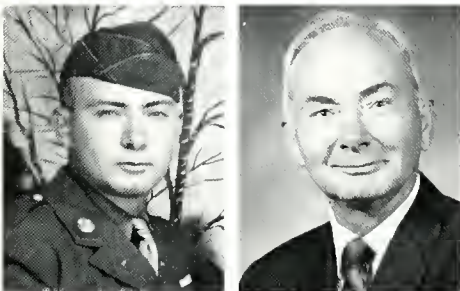
Left the States on Oct. 4, 1942, and flew the North Atlantic route from England to Port Lyautey and Casablanca on Jan. 15, 1943. He rejoined the 47th BG at Youks Les Bains, Algeria. After 52 missions in Tunisia, Malta, Sicily and Italy, he left Foggia for the States on Nov. 1, 1943.

Hospitalized with hepatitis in Santa Ana until March 1944, he was then assigned to Morris Field, Charlotte, NC, in April 1944, where he met an Army nurse, Katie Ruppert (high point of his life). She was sent to Europe and he was assigned to Moody Field, Valdosta, GA. Katie returned from overseas and they were married on Aug. 16, 1945.

They both separated from the service and settled in Burlington, WI. They have six children: Peggy, Jack, Tim, Mary, Patty and Terry; and 11 grandchildren. Began work as an estimator for Lavelle Industries in Burlington, WI in June 1951.

Retired as lieutenant colonel from the USAFR in 1968 and was awarded the Silver Star, Purple Heart, five Air Medals, campaign and theater ribbons.

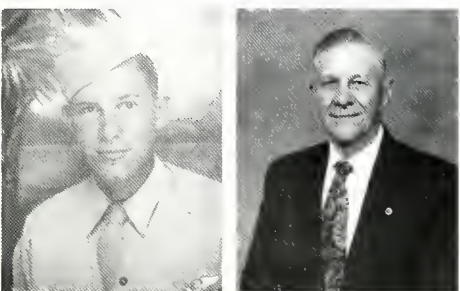
MORRIS ELDER, born Dec. 21, 1917, Seagraves, TX. Enlisted US Army, 1939, transferred to Air Corps. Assigned to 20th Recon. Sqdn., 47th BG, Jan. 15, 1941.



Stayed with 47th until January 1952, transferred to 49th Air Div., stayed through June 1955. Stayed in Air Force for over 30 years, retiring in December 1969. Worked for state of Colorado 12 years, retired 1982.

Married Sarah C. Melton March 10, 1941. They have two children and five grandchildren. Activities include church, Masons, Silver Key and other benevolent organizations.

EDWIN R. EXLEY, born Dec. 4, 1923, Clio, GA. Graduated from Effingham Academy, Springfield, GA. Entered service on May 15, 1943. Basic training St. Petersburg, FL. Armament School at Lowry Field, CO. Gunnery School at Buckingham AFB, Ft. Myers, FL. Advanced training at Morris Field, Charlotte, NC. Joined 47th on Isle of Corsica. Flew 50 combat missions.



Air Medal w/OLC, four Battle Stars, European Theater. Discharged Oct. 12, 1945 as staff sergeant.

Married Reelee Bragg, June 25, 1947. They have two sons, one daughter and five grandchildren. Retired Jan. 13, 1983, from Union Camp Corp. after 32 1/2 years employment.

He has been a resident of Springfield, GA since 1946 and he and his wife still reside there.

DONALD H. FALKINGHAM, born Dec. 13, 1918, in Lexington, IL. He first learned to fly in the CPT Program while in college; graduated with BS in petroleum engineering from Missouri School of Mines in June 1941. Enlisted in February 1942, but because of a severe auto accident while in training, it was July 1943 before he graduated and was sent to Boise, ID to begin training.

After stints in Scottsbluff, NE and Langley Field, VA, he was sent overseas in January 1944 with the 455th BG. Transferred to the 12th AF, 47th BG, 84th Sqdn. Won his first Air Medal while working with Col. Clizby in developing a means to bomb close support to the troops using ground control radar.

Joined the 84th Sqdn. when stationed on the side of Mount Vesuvius outside of Naples. Being very short of pilots, they flew missions almost daily supporting the bridgehead at Anzio. They moved several times going north up to the boot of Italy and finally to Corsica to support the invasion of Southern France. Moved to Salon, France and their unit was assigned duty of ferrying supplies to the troops, and he was appointed acting operations officer of the 84th.

Moved back to Grosseto, Italy and is very proud that their unit transitioned from A-20s to A-26s without losing a night of combat flying. Transferred to group headquarters as assistant air inspector. The group was flying night operations, however, a weather reconnaissance mission was flown each night before sundown to witness the weather in the Po Valley. During one of these missions he listened to a squadron of P-47s that had found the Germans trying to fall back over a bridge as they retreated. He joined the P-47s and attacked the Germans, destroying several trucks and formations. For this he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. He flew over 50 missions. Also awarded Air Medal w/2 OLCs.

Civilian activity as petroleum engineer and president of four different subsidiary companies.

He and wife Mary Margaret have two children, Deanne Beth and Janis Kay; five grandchildren: Matthew, Jason and Jon Fenwick and Donald and Debra Worst; and two great-grandchildren, Donald and Mary Margaret Hamilton.

ELON W. FELSKE, enlisted in the service on Nov. 6, 1942, at San Diego, CA. Assigned as a gunner to the 97th Sqdn. and with Col. B.B. Taylor flew 42 missions.

Discharged on Oct. 4, 1945, as staff sergeant. Awards include the Air Medal w/2 clusters, EAME Ribbon w/4 Battle Stars, Good Conduct, WWII Victory Medal and Presidential Unit Citation.

As a civilian, he worked construction as a carpenter and personally developed a housing sub-division and a campground. He spent 10 years as asst. supt. for a commercial and factory construction company.



He and wife Regenea have been married 49 years and raised six children: Gary, Adele Minneart, Sandi Challenor, Janet Anderson, Diane Hartsock and Tim. They have eight grandchildren: Bret, Ryan, Brandon, Holly, Connie, Kelli, Kari and Troy.

ALVIN M. FISCHER, born Oct. 7, 1922, Pottsville, PA. Graduated Pottsville High School. Enlisted in the USAAC in 1941. Graduated as airplane and engine mechanic at Shepard Field, TX in 1942. Completed A20 Douglas Aircraft Factory School. Santa Monica, CA. Assigned to HQ Sqdn., 47th BG, Will Rogers Field April in 1942. Later transferred to 97th Sqdn. and was discharged in September 1945 as staff sergeant.



Graduated from Bucknell Univ. with BSME in 1949. Worked for Philadelphia & Reading Coal & Iron Co., then joined Bendix Westinghouse Automotive Airbrake Company in 1950.

In 1958 joined Mack Trucks Inc., Allentown, PA. Retired after 25 years as vice president of product engineering in 1983.

Married Janice Ubil on July 4, 1946. They have three children and five grandchildren.

In retirement they travel and he volunteers at a local hospital, their church. The Allentown Symphony and The Lehigh County Conference of Churches.

Their present home is in Allentown, PA.

TED R. FORSYTHE, enlisted March 1942. Assignments: a/c pilot 43B, flight command B-25, A-20 1943-44, 3rd AF; Asst. OPS 86th Sqdn., 47th BG 1944-45; Mobilization assigned Stead AFB, Reno, NV 1951-65, Base and Wing OPS.

Discharged July 9, 1978. Retired as lieutenant colonel, USAFR.

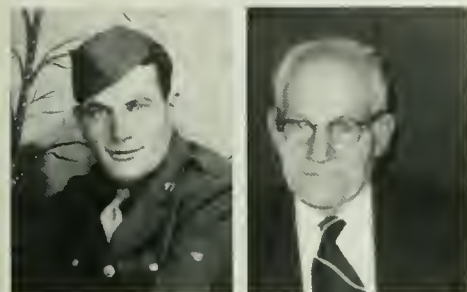
Awarded Distinguished Flying Cross and four Air Medals.

He is now a transportation executive.

Married to Veme. They have two children Olivia Martin and Patricia Doyle and grandchildren Daren and Devin Dunlap, Kimbol Garino Pistochini and Kendall Garino.

ANTONIO A. FURLONE, born Aug. 5, 1914, Keene, NH. Enlisted and inducted at Fort Devens, MA, Jan. 13, 1942. Transferred to

Jefferson Barracks, MO and assigned to 47th BG in May 1942 as private first class. Then sent to Will Rogers Field, OK and Greensboro, NC. Shipped out from Fort Dix, NJ to Casablanca Nov. 2, 1942. Sent to Youks Les Bains, Algeria, starting operations there. Assigned to Materiel (Flyers' Equipment). Stayed with the 47th into Sicily, Italy, Corsica, S. France and back to Italy. Returned to States for R&R as corporal April 25, 1945. Reassigned May 1945 to Chanute Field, IL as sergeant and instructor of flying equipment until discharge Sept. 25, 1945.

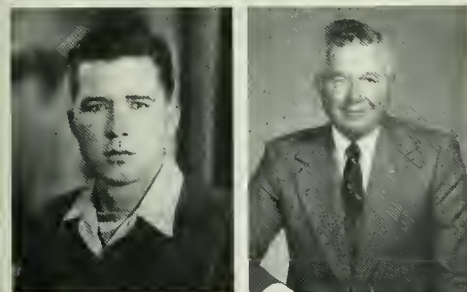


Awarded Unit Citation and Purple Heart.

His activities include church, Italian Society, American Legion, Knights of Columbus. Returned to former employment as printer at J.A. Wright and Co., Keene, NH. Retired 1981.

Married to Maybelle Kaiser. He has children Katherine and Larry Martel from wife's first marriage. They have four grandchildren Michael and Andrea Martel and Amanda and David Grenier.

JAMES K. GAISER, born Nov. 16, 1920, and enlisted on June 2, 1941. Went to basic training at Hamilton Field, Fresno, CA. Stationed at Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma City and Greensboro, NC. War time duty began on arrival in Glasgow, Scotland and continued through North Africa and Italy until at Grosseto when he and Tony Furlone were injured when their jeep ran into an antitank mine.



Discharged Sept. 15, 1945, as staff sergeant, but re-enlisted in 1948 in the USAF Assigned in 1951 to Wiesbaden, Germany where he met and married Helen Roston who was a civilian with USAF. They brought home two daughters, Mary Ellen and Susan, and subsequently added James Jr. to the family.

Awards include the Purple Heart, Good Conduct, Distinguished Unit Badge, American Defense Service Medal and EAME Service Medal w/8 Bronze Stars.

Assigned to HQ Cmd. at Bolling AFB where he was chosen outstanding airman of the command in 1958; reassigned in 1961 to the Spec. Air Missions Wing in the Pentagon and in 1964 retired to accept a position with the State Dept. Foreign Service Reserve. In 1966 he was offered

the position of XO with the Command Counsel at Army Materiel Cmd. until retiring in 1982 in Titusville, FL.

He has four grandchildren: Heather and Joseph Saunders and James III and Richard Gaiser.

PAUL L. GALLAGHER, born May 28, 1922, in Boston, MA, enlisted in the USAAF on Sept. 26, 1942. Attended Air Craft Mechanic School at Seymour Johnson Field, Goldsboro, NC and Douglas Aircraft in Santa Monica, CA. Received aircraft gunnery training at Buckingham AAFB at Ft. Myers, FL in 1943. Was then assigned to the A-20 base in Florence, NC for training.



Assigned to the 97th BS, 47th BG, in April 1944, at Ottaviano, Italy, based at the foot of Mt. Vesuvius, just south of Naples. Flew first mission on May 9, 1944, over the Anzio and Cassino combat areas. Engaged in 41 day missions and then 19 night missions, the last being on March 13, 1945.

Participated in the Rome-Arno, Southern France and North Appenines Campaigns. Discharged as a staff sergeant on Aug. 20, 1945, from Ft. Thomas, KY.

Following discharge, graduated from Boston University with a BS degree in 1948 and from B.U. Law School in 1950 where he was awarded a bachelor of laws.

Was a practicing attorney in the great Boston area until 1986, and upon retirement established a residence in Naples, FL.

Married Jacquelyn Turnbull of Orleans, VT in 1948. They have four children and seven grandchildren.

His most memorable experience occurred, during the Italian Campaign when he met his younger brother who was a rifleman in the 10th Mtn. Inf. Div. at Montecatini in the Appenines.

GEORGE L. GAUDREAU, born Nov. 30, 1923, Dover, NH. He enlisted in the USAC from South Berwick, ME in April 1943. Stationed at Nashville, TN; Maxwell Field, AL; Bennettsville, SC; Denver, CO; Panama City, FL; Fort Myers, FL; Charleston, SC; Charlotte, NC; and had combat duty in Italy with the 86th BS.



Flew 53 missions as a gunner and was awarded the Soldier's Medal, Purple Heart and Air Medal. He was released from active duty in October 1945.

Graduated from Boston Univ. in August 1948 in education; did graduate work at UCLA, Redlands; Univ. of California at Riverside, and Cal State, Fullerton, CA. He was teacher, coach, counselor and middle school administrator. Retired from the Hemet (CA) School District in 1981.

Married Colleen Dugdale from Omaha, NE in 1953 and has three daughters and five grandchildren. His wife passed away in October 1984.

ROGER GIMBEL, born March 11, 1925, Philadelphia, PA. Graduated from Talt School in 1942. Enlisted in September 1943 while attending Yale University and called to active duty March 11, 1943. Primary pilot training at Orangeburg, SC; basic, Sumter Field, SC; advanced, Turner Field, GA; and graduated in May 1944 (44E). He was one of the first cadets qualified in B-25s on graduation and immediately sent to combat training in A-20s at Florence, SC.



Overseas to Mediterranean Theater, Italy, joined 47th Bomber Gp., 85th Sqdn., Piombino, winter of 1944 at Villa Albenese, Grosseto. Completed 41 combat missions in northern Italy and Yugoslavia.

Awarded Air Medal with two clusters and Presidential Citation, two stars.

Discharged Oct. 26, 1945, as 1st lieutenant. Graduated from Yale in 1947 (Class of 45W).

Writer for *Dayton Journal Herald* in 1948. Producer for NBC in the 1950s and has produced over 500 television shows and 75 movies which garnered 18 Emmys. Still actively producing movies.

Married Tedi Holiday in 1944; Nancy Davis in 1956 (deceased); and Jennifer Warren in 1976. He has four children and two grandchildren, Hunter and River.

PAUL M. GLENN, born Oct. 23, 1916, in Ashton, IL. Graduated from Ashton HS in 1934; attended Univ. of Illinois, 1936-40; and enlisted in the US Army, 122nd FA in March 1941. Was selected aviation cadet and graduated



with Class 42-F on July 3, 1942, Valdosta, GA. Commissioned and assigned to 27th BG, Meridian, MS.

Assigned to the 47th BG, then in Algeria, going to 85th Sqdn. and flew 48 missions in North Africa, Sicily and Italy. Returned to the US in February 1944 and assigned to OTU, Florence AFB until separation in August 1945.

Re-entered service in July 1948; served in Japan, Germany and Morocco. Attended Russian Language School, Syracuse University (BA) and Arabic Language School, Georgetown University.

He retired from the Pentagon in July 1964 as major.

Entered US State Dept. Foreign Service and served in Africa, Middle East, Southeast Asia until retiring to Albuquerque in 1975.

Married Jane B. Wingert in 1943 and they have five children.

BENJAMIN M. GRANT, born Sept. 13, 1918, Grandfield, OK. Graduated Grandfield High School; BS in animal science, Oklahoma A&M College. Stillwater, OK, commissioned 2nd lieutenant infantry reserves; active duty, May 1, 1941, 2nd Inf. Div., Ft. Sam Houston, San Antonio, TX; Louisiana and North Carolina Maneuvers.



May 1, 1942 Air Corps pilot course as student officer. Santa Ana, CA; Dec. 3, 1942 rated pilot, class 42-K, Luke Field, Phoenix, AZ; Dec. 4, 1942, 46th BG, 3rd AF, Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma City, A-20 training.

February 22, 1943, ferried A-20 by way of South America. West Africa to 47th BG, 97th Sqdn., Tunisia, North Africa, Feb. 28, 1944. Completed 56 combat missions, North Africa, Sicily and Italy. Awarded Distinguished Flying Cross and five Air Medals.

April 17, 1944, 46th BG, 87th Sqdn., Morris Field, NC, instructor A-20s; Oct. 7, 1944, HQ Army Airways Communications System, AAF, Asheville, NC, operations officer.

May 10, 1946 separated active duty AAF, Mitchell Field, NY; Dec 8, 1946, Group OP, 177th BG Reserves, Tinker Field, OK; Sept. 2, 1947, Mobilization Assignment Reserve, AACS, Tinker Field, OK, flight check pilot. Tendered reserve commission 1958.

Married Alma Lynch, Feb. 3, 1940. Two adopted children.

SAM M. GRASSO, born Feb. 25, 1921, Cucamonga, CA. Entered service in the USAAC on July 16, 1943. Armament School at Lowry Field, CO; Gunnery School at Ft. Meyers, FL; and overseas training on A-20s in Charlotte, NC. Shipped overseas on Oct. 13, 1944 on the *Athos II* and arrived at a mass graveyard of sunken ships at Naples, Italy 16 days later.

Lt. Walton Kendricks crew was assigned to the 47th BG, 84th Sqdn. He participated in 39 missions, mostly night sorties in A-20s and A-26s and was discharged in November 1945 as staff sergeant. He has an Air Medal and OLC.

Most vivid memories are the daylight mis-



sions when they followed the P-47s in ground attacks as the enemy fled across the Po River.

He and wife Grace have two children, Sam Jr. and Rosemary, and one granddaughter Katie. Retired after 45 years in aviation, space industry and manufacturing engineering.

AUGUSTUS B. GREEN JR., born Nov. 12, 1921, Dallas, TX. Graduated Technical High School 1940. Enlisted in the USAAC in November 1940. Aircraft crew chief and aviation student, Class 42-I, Stockton, CA. Graduated as staff sergeant pilot in September 1942; assigned to 51st Sqdn., 46th BG in Blyth, CA; and transferred to Will Rogers Field, OK in November 1943.

Promoted flight officer in January 1943 and ordered overseas in February 1943. Joined the 84th Sqdn., 47th BG at Souk El Arbra, Algeria. Returned to US and assigned to Morris Field, Charlotte, NC in November 1943 as instructor pilot. Assigned to Will Rogers Field, OK June 1945 as instrument instructor. Discharged as 2nd lieutenant in November 1945.

Re-enlisted February 1946 and retired with 30 years service in 1970 as a chief master sergeant. Earned Air Medal.

Employed 15 years as a postal supervisor. Married Dorothy Burnett in June 1944 and has two daughters, Carol and Cynthia, and four grandchildren: Sherry, David, Alica and Angela.

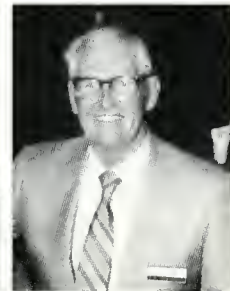
CHARLES V. GREFFET (CHARLIE), born Oct. 16, 1920, Charleston, SC. Graduated Charleston High. BA from Univ. of Maryland and MA from Georgetown Univ. Flying cadet November 1941; Valdosta, GA, Class 42-F July 1942. Flew to North Africa with 27th BG; joined 47th BG January 1943 at Youks Les Bains, Algeria; and assigned to 85th BS.



Returned to the States with 47th in May 1945. Rank on joining 47th, second lieutenant, major in May 1945. Was squadron operations officer last 18 months of WWII. Stayed with 47th BG until 1951. Had various assignments and service schools including Pentagon and Air War College (1958). Three tours (11 years) as Air Defense Attache in Argentina, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela.

Retired from USAF in 1970 as colonel. Married Bettie Kilpatrick December 1946, adopted two children, Eric and Drucilla, and had two of their own. Jeannine and William. Flew 134 combat missions with the 47th. Since retirement from USAF he has owned and operated Greffet Realty in Tucson, AZ.

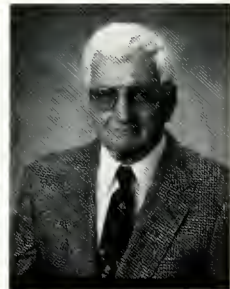
ERNEST E. GUSTAFSON, born Jan. 20, 1917, in Crosby, TX. Entered the USAAC for pilot training on July 16, 1941. Primary training held at Lindberg Field, CA. Graduated in February 1942, Class 42-B and was assigned to the B-17 Gp. in Pendleton, OR, then transferred in April to the 84th Sqdn., 46th Gp. in Oklahoma City.



Left States Sept. 4, 1942, flying with group to England. Flew to Africa December 2 and completed 50 missions in Africa, Sicily and Italy. Arrived back in the States December 1943. Joined Replacement Training Unit (A-20) at Morris Field, NC, January 1944; separated from service July 15, 1945, and went back to school for a degree in geology.

Married Virginia Chapman in April 1953 and has three children (two are twins). Employed by Goldston Oil Corporation in 1947 and is still with them on a part-time basis (1994).

RAY T. HALL, born on Jan. 13, 1923, in Waco, NE. Enlisted in the USAAC on Feb. 4, 1943; trained at St. Petersburg, FL; Clearwater, FL; Gulfport, MS; Las Vegas, NV; Florence, SC; Charlotte, NC; Savannah, GA; and was assigned to the 47th BG, 84th Sqdn. on April 23, 1944, as a gunner.



Served in the ETO (Rome-Arno, Southern France, Ardennes, Air Offensive Europe and Rhineland). Flew 60 missions with Lt. Elsworth Totten as his pilot on the A-20.

Served 32 months and discharged on Oct. 10, 1945, at Lincoln AB, Lincoln, NE with the rank of staff sergeant. Awarded the EAME Theater Ribbon with five Bronze Stars and Air Medal with one Bronze Cluster.

Married Bernice Lovegrove on Jan. 20, 1943, and has four children, 10 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Retired in 1990 at Exeter, NE, where he owned Hall Contracting Co. and Horizontal Boring Co.

FRANK HAMMOND, born on Dec. 9, 1919, in Harvey, IL. Attended grade and public schools in Walker, MN; BA degree from Carleton College, 1941; LL.B. degree from Harvard Law School, 1948; and member of Phi Beta Kappa and Delta Sigma Rho.



Joined the USAF in 1941 and flew 60 missions during an 18 month stay with the 84th Sqdn. Along with the usual theater ribbons, etc., he received the Air Medal with clusters, Purple Heart for a flak wound received north of Cassino and the Distinguished Flying Cross for blowing up an ammunition factory somewhere south of Florence. Separated from service in 1945 as captain.

Began working for Briggs and Morgan in 1948, served as president from 1970-1977, and has been a partner since 1954. Served on many committees, board of directors, and councils, as well as serving as president and chairman of several organizations.

Among his civilian honors are the Boss of the Year Award in 1977 (Jaycees); Ted Christianson Memorial Award, 1980; BSA Distinguished Eagle Scout, 1981; UNICO Citizen of the Year, 1981; Best Lawyers in America, 1987 and 1989; Distinguished Humanitarian Award, RCBA, 1989; and the Carleton College Alumni Achievement Award, 1966.

Married Frances (Rusty) Anderson of Savannah, GA, in February 1945. They have two children, Susan Jones and Kent Hammond; and four grandchildren: Kristin and Leslie Jones and Taylor and Grant Hammond.

WALTER J. HANNA JR. (WALT), born Dec. 15, 1917, in Gilroy, CA. Graduated from Gilroy High School; spent three years in San Jose State College; flying cadet, November 1939; Kelly Field Class of 40-D, July 1940; and assigned to the 95th Sqdn., 17th BG, McCord Field, WA.



On May 7, 1941, assigned to the 84th Sqdn., 47th BG and moved to Fresno, CA. In August 1941; Dec. 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor for coastal patrol. Received first A-20s and transferred to Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma City in February 1942.

Ordered overseas on Aug. 1, 1942, and arrived at Youks Les Bains, Algeria on Jan. 5, 1943. Finished the North African Campaign and was sent home in June as operations officer of training group at Will Rogers Field.

Picked up an A-20B, 41-3166 in Kansas City and flew to North Africa via Labrador, Greenland, Iceland, England and Morocco. The nose name

on his plane was Nancy Lee (named after his daughter). They moved to Youks Les Bains in Algeria and into the war.

Transferred to the Pentagon as project officer for light and medium bombardment on June 28, 1944, then Western Flying Training Command, Santa Ana, CA. on Aug. 25, 1945, as assistant operations officer. Separated from the service in November 1945 with the rank of lieutenant colonel. Awarded the Silver Star and Air Medal.

Tendered commission in the Regular Army in May 1947 in the polio ward of Los Angeles General Hospital. When sufficiently recovered he joined the civil engineering firm run by his father in Gilroy. Still active in the firm, working part time and enjoying it.

Married Nancy Fulton in 1962 and adopted her two children to add to three from his first marriage.

GORDON W. HARGIS, was only a short-timer with the 85th BS, 47th BG. He enlisted May 18, 1942, Class 43-F flight training. Served with ATC, Love Field, TX; Tripoli, Libya. When the ATC Ferry Div. folded in September 1946, he transferred to the 47th BG. The group closed Lake Charles and moved to Biggs Field, El Paso, TX, Oct. 16, 1946.

Due to assignment of about 20 new pilots in November 1946, all of the pilots on 18 month commitment were released from active duty to make room for the new 2nd lieutenants. He was one of the released group and completed terminal leave on Jan. 19, 1947.

Awards/Medals: Air Medal, American Campaign, EAME w/one Battle Star and WWII Victory Medal.

The time he spent with the 47th was immensely enjoyable. He was hired by TWA as copilot on June 23, 1947. He still flies a Lockheed L-1049G Constellation to airshows. It was restored in Kansas City by TWA retirees.

Married to Marie and has two sons, Phillip and Michael, and three grandchildren: Alexa Marie, Robert and Benjamin.

ARTHUR J. HARSZY, enlisted in the USAAF on Feb. 3, 1942, at Chanute Field and entered A&E School. Assigned to the 77th Ftr. Sqdn, 20th Ftr. Gp. at Spartanburg, SC and Sarasota, FL in June 1942; January 1943, went to Wright Field, Dayton, OH; May 1943, G&A Aircraft Co., Willow Grove, PA; October 1943, Aerial Gunnery School, Harlingen, TX; Jan. 1, 1944, 46th BG; June 3, 1944, departed the States and flew an A-20J and crashed in Brazil; June 18, 1944, joined 85th Sqdn., 47th BG in Italy. He flew 49 missions with the 85th.



Discharged from service Aug. 26, 1945, and joined 131st FW MOANG, Lambert Field in

1946. Recalled to active duty in March 1951 with 131st FW at Bernstrom AFB, Austin, TX and George AFB, CA. Discharged from the USAF on Nov. 30, 1952, with the rank of master sergeant. Awarded four Campaign Stars MTOUSA, Good Conduct Medal, Air Medal with two OLCs and Distinguished Unit Badge.

Elementary school teacher, he married Gale and they have one son James G. and one grandchild Marsha E. Harszy.

ARTHUR S. HEAD JR., born on Dec. 15, 1919, in Reading, PA; graduated Reading High School, 1937; and served two and one half years as an electrical construction apprentice prior to enlistment in the USAC with the 47th BG. Completed his apprenticeship with Buck Electrical Construction Co. of the IBEW #743 of Reading, PA. Served his entire enlistment with the 86th Sqdn., 47th BG as an A&E mechanic and crew chief.



Discharged in September 1945 at Indiantown Gap, PA, with the rank of staff sergeant.

Retired member of the Local #743 IBEW Electricians Union and past president of Hillside Swimming Assoc., Reading, PA.

Married Meredith on July 7, 1945, and they have son Michael and grandson Steven. He lives in Reading, PA during the summer and New Port Richey, FL during the winter.

CLARENCE HEIMGARTNER, born on Aug. 2, 1915, near Genesee, ID. Entered the service on Aug. 19, 1942, at Spokane, WA. The majority of his service time was spent as an airplane mechanic and gunner. He was involved in air offensives in Italy and awarded the Air Medal in 1944 for his actions as fire control gunner during the bombardment of an enemy ammunition dump near Lake Trasimono, Italy.



Discharged on Sept. 20, 1945, with the rank of staff sergeant, after serving as airplane maintenance tech, fire fighter and auto mechanic at various Stateside sites.

Returned to Idaho and farming after his discharge. Married Erma Sampson in January 1942, and they have three children: Nadine, Dan and Tammy; two grandsons; five step-grandchildren; and seven step-great-grandchildren.

EARL D. HILLER, born on July 22, 1921, in Portage, WI. Enlisted in the WING in June 1938; the 32nd Div. was federalized and he was

sent to Camp Beauregard, LA in October 1940 and later transferred to Camp Livingston.



Transferred to the USAAF on Feb. 9, 1942, and sent to Will Rogers AB, Oklahoma City. He was assigned to Air Gunnery School at Harlingen, TX in 1942; graduated and returned to Will Rogers Field and assigned to a group of A-20s and pilots out of California. In December 1942 they flew as a group to North Africa via the southern route. Their ship, #409, with pilot, S/Sgt. Marion R. Sexton and gunner S/Sgt. Al Porter and Hiller was delayed 11 days on the Ascension Islands due to a blown left engine. They caught up with the 47th BG at Youks Les Bains, North Africa and were assigned to the 97th BS.

He flew 53 missions over North Africa, Pantellaria, Sicily and Italy. Some missions were flown from Malta as part of a detachment of the 47th BG assigned to the British force defending that island. He received the Air Medal with five OLCs and various unit ribbons.

Reassigned to the States in January 1944; attended Instructors School at Buckingham AAF, Ft. Myers, FL for 13 weeks; then to Ardmore AAB, Ardmore, OK as crew instructor. He served in that capacity until his discharge on June 6, 1945.

Received BS degree in mathematics and master's degree in school administration from Oklahoma Univ. He taught mathematics and was a high school principal in public and private schools for 40 years. Activities since retirement include church work, wood shop and travel.

Married Rosemary Culmer of Oklahoma City on March 9, 1944, and has two children and one grandson (now in the service in Germany). Their youngest son is a Vietnam veteran, having spent 22 months in combat. Rosemary taught music in public and private schools for 35 years.

ERSKINE D. HIOTT, enlisted in the service on March 27, 1940, and assigned as a flying cadet to Kelly Field and McChord Field, Fresno, CA; Will Rogers Field, Greensboro, NC; Africa; Sicily; Italy; Corsica; and France.



Discharged in July 1946 with the rank of captain.

Married Bette and they have two children, Susy and Val, and three grandchildren: Mary,

Ashley and Mallory. He is retired from the civil service.

ERWIN A. HOAG (WIN), completed one year of college at Houghton College of Mining and Technology in Northern Michigan and was enrolled as an ROTC reserve officer training candidate. Inducted into the US Army on June 21, 1941, and assigned to the Army Signal Corps. Transported to Ft. Monmouth, NJ, then to the Southeast Training Cmd. in Madison, MS.

Basic training at Bush Field, Augusta, GA, in AT-6; AIT was at Barksdale Field, LA; and on Feb. 6, 1942, received his Silver Wings, 2nd lieutenant bars and active duty assignment to Gieger Field, Spokane, WA, as copilot. Sent to Will Rogers AFB, OK, and assigned to fly the A-20 to Newfoundland, Greenland, Iceland, England, France and Portugal to Casablanca.

Occupied Youks Les Bains airstrip in Tunisia and flew ground support missions. Completed 50 missions and returned to the States. He was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation and five Air Medals.

Sent to Lowry Field, CO; Communications School, Scott Field, IL; Rome, Italy; and set up communications for the Berlin Airlift (entire squadron received the Humane Action Medal for this duty). After three years in Germany, he was assigned as base communications officer for Tinker AFB, OK. Retired June 30, 1961, with 20 years of combined, enlisted, officer, Army and Air Force time.

Retired with his wife in the Pacific Northwest. Obtained a real estate license and set up his own brokers office, Investments West, in south Seattle.

EARL L. HOLCOMB, born on Feb. 17, 1921, in Plainview, TX; graduated high school in Amarillo, TX, in 1939; received BSEE degree from the University of New Mexico, 1949; and post graduate at Nuclear Physics, University of California, Los Alamos, NM.

Enlisted in the USAAC in February 1941 as crew chief. Assigned to the 46th BG, A-20s, Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma City, OK; as flight officer in January 1943; flew an A-20C to Natal, to Ascension Islands and to Casablanca, North Africa in March 1943. Joined the 47th BG, 85th Sqdn., at Souk el Arba, Major Penix, CO. Flew missions in Tunisia, Pantellaria, Lampadusa, Sicily and Italy. Bombed Germans in Cassino Monastery and led the squadron on several missions and the group on mission at Frosnone, Italy. He flew a total of 67 missions.

Married Leota Brown on May 3, 1944. Worked for Scientific Laboratories, Los Alamos, NM, atomic weapons; Korean War, P-51s and F-86s, nuclear officer, SAC; and experimental test pilot for Chance Vought Aircraft Co. in 1956.

THOMAS C. HORN, born on Aug. 30, 1916, in Hay Springs, NE. Graduated from the University of Nebraska in 1941 and was commissioned 2nd lieutenant, Infantry. Aviation cadet in July 1941 at Thunderbird Field, AZ; Bakersfield, CA; Mather Field, CA; and placed on active duty on Dec. 7, 1941. Received his wings in February 1942 and his first pilot assignment was B-17s Boise ID. Assigned to A-20s in March 1942 with the 86th BS, Will Rogers Field, OK.

Flew to England via the *Queen Mary*

(unescorted) in September 1942; followed the invasion into Casablanca, Morocco in November 1942; participated in North African, Sicilian (from Malta) and Italian Campaigns as an operations officer and pilot.



Returned to the States in May 1944 and assigned operations officer (major), Accelerated Service Test Branch, Wright Field (Vandalia AFB), OH. Released from active duty in October 1945. Awards include the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with two OLCs, Purple Heart and the EAME Campaign Medal with four Battle Stars.

Remained active in the USAFR; graduated from Air War College in 1957; and retired in 1976 with the rank of colonel.

Married Jane Ellis, of Lincoln, NE, on June 14, 1942, and they have two children, Christie and Scott. He had an active banking career from 1946-1986; was executive vice president, First National Bank, Hay Springs, NE; organizer and president of Security National Corp., Sioux City, IA; vice chairman of Security Bank & Trust, Alamogordo, NM.

RICHARD E. HORNER, born Oct. 24, 1917, in Werenshall, MN. Graduated from Univ. of Minnesota with BS in aeronautical engineering. Reported to basic training June 26, 1940, at the USAAC Flight Trng. Ctr., Randolph Field, TX. Graduated and commissioned a 2nd lieutenant on Nov. 15, 1940. Active duty with the 95th BS, 17th BG(M), McChord Field, WA. Transferred to 47th BG(L) in June 1940 and moved to Hammer Field, CA.

The attack at Pearl Harbor brought immediate orders to fly to the San Francisco area and carry out dawn patrol off the California coast. After six weeks they were ordered back to home base at Fresno, CA; moved to Will Rogers Field, OK; Greensboro, NC; to POE at Westover, MA.

Flew across the North Atlantic and landed in East Anglia, where he became CO of the 86th and ordered to their initial bombing base at Youks Les Bains.

Reported to Wright Field to become the director of test engineering for experimental aircraft. In 1955 an invitation came to join the Office of the Secretary of the AF as deputy assistant secretary for Research and Development. Within a matter of months became assistant secretary and four years later the associate administrator of NASA. In 1960 he accepted a position to become the senior vice president, Technical of the Northrop Corp.

Married Jean Margaret Hodgson on June 21, 1941. They have two children, Richard and Judith.

RONALD D. HORNER, enlisted in the Army Coast Artillery on Aug. 6, 1941; assigned to the

67th AAA in November 1941; and transferred to Ft. Bragg, NC on Dec. 7, 1941. His unit arrived in the New York area and set up at the Curtis-Wright Propeller plant in Paterson, NJ. In the fall of 1942 they had maneuvers in Virginia and prepared to be shipped overseas.



Left New York in January 1943, landed in Oran, Africa. First engagement was at the Thelepte Air Field when the 47th BG was bombed. After the campaign ended in Africa the 67th was again assigned to the 47th BG in the Tunisia area; moved in October 1943 to the Island of Sicily HQ Sqdn.; then to Italy and set up in the Kings Castle area; transferred to the 97th Sqdn. at the Foggia base of operations and assigned to the Bomb Release Section.

Returned to the States, discharged on Aug. 6, 1945, and returned to Kansas City. Re-enlisted in the USAAC, and released in March 1947 and transferred into the Reserves. Recalled into the Weapons Section of the USAF, he remained with the military until he had accumulated 20 years of active duty and was discharged on March 1, 1966.

Married Vada Sonders in 1945 and they have six children: Danny, Charles, Rickey, James, Annette and Billy; and nine grandchildren: Marcia Rene, Kate, Benjamin, Crystal, Brian, Tonya, Tina, Drew and Colby. Between military assignments, 1946-50, he went to Plumbing School and worked in plumbing industry.

CHARLES IRONS, born on Nov. 9, 1919, in Glasgow, Scotland. Enlisted in the USAAC on Oct. 1, 1941; assigned to the 47th BG, 85th BS at Fresno, CA in January 1942; completed Aerial Gunnery School at Harlingen, TX and flew 50 missions over Africa, Sicily and Italy.



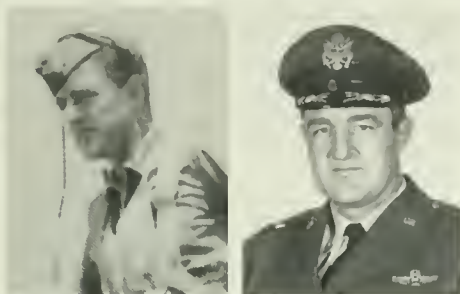
While making a strafing and bombing mission in Africa, enemy fire shot out their engine and forced them to make a crash landing. No one was seriously hurt and they walked the rest of the day and most of the night until they found a US Army encampment that took them back to their base by jeep.

Discharged in August 1945 with the rank of staff sergeant. His awards include the Air Medal with Silver OLC.

Married Margaret (Peggy) White on Jan. 5, 1944, upon returning from overseas duty. They

have three children, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He retired from the US Post Office in November 1982.

MARTIN H. JOHNSON, enlisted February 1941; assigned to the 137th Inf.; and was stationed at Camp Robinson, AR. Attended AAC Flying School, Sikeston, MO; Randolph Field, TX; Class 41-1, phase training in B-17, Gowen Field, Boise, ID. Transferred to 124th Observation Sqdn. Ft. Leavenworth, KS, and Phase training in A-20 at Will Rogers, Oklahoma City.



Shipped overseas in February 1942 and flew his A-20 to South America, Ascension Island, Dakar, Marrakech, Morocco, Casablanca, Rabat Sale, Souk el Arba. After 50 missions he volunteered for a second tour, completing a total of 85 missions with the 85th Sqdn.

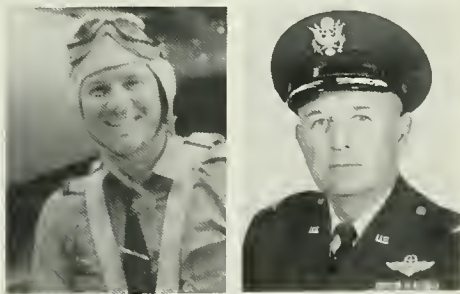
Awards include the Air Medal w/17 clusters, Distinguished Flying Cross and the French Croix de Guerre with Silver Star and Palm.

Returned to the States in October 1944. Served in training command and graduated Command and General Staff School, Ft. Leavenworth. Accepted honorable discharge from USAF and joined the IDANG as a pilot.

He was squadron commander, fighter group commander and served as assistant adjutant general for Air Chief of Staff Aide de Camp and personal pilot for five different governors of Idaho. Retired as COL, USAF in 1961.

Married Eileen Stroup (Miss Idaho and Miss Northwest Passage) on Oct. 28, 1944.

WALDO BRIGHAM JONES, born in May 1916, in Hudson, MA. Former airport manager and commercial pilot, he was commissioned in RCAF in 1940 and transferred to the USAAC in May 1942. Joined the 47th BG at Will Rogers Field in July and took the *Queen Mary* to England (advance echelon) in September 1942; then to North Africa, Sicily and Italy to participate in over 50 bombing missions with the 97th Sqdn.



Retired as colonel in 1969. Decorations include the Legion of Merit with OLC, Distinguished Flying Cross; Bronze Star Medal, Air Medal with Silver OLC, Army Commendation Medal with one OLC, AF Commendation Medal and various US, Canadian and UN service awards.

Life member of TROA, DAV and Daedalians; founder and charter member of AOPA; past president of Venetia Isles Homeowners and Fairway Villas Homeowners Assoc.; past president of Feather Sound CC

Married Emmy Sands in January 1942 and has two children and three grandchildren. Currently resides in Clearwater, FL.

WILLIAM HOWARD JONES, as an aviation cadet in December 1942, received basic training at Miami Beach and CTD at Oshkosh, WI. Pre-flight: Santa Ana, CA; primary: Thunderbird Field, Phoenix; basic at Lemore, CA; advanced at LaJunta, CO. First class to train in B-25s. Received his wings April 13, 1944, while still 19 years old.



RTU in A-20s at Morris Field, Charlotte, NC; left Newport News, VA via ship and arrived in Naples in September 1944. Was assigned to flying night missions out of Rosegiano and Grosetto, where they made night crash landing on Jan. 11, 1945. In various hospitals in Italy and the US, he was discharged from Tilton General, Ft. Dix, NJ in October 1947 as a captain.

He completed Gettysburg College in 1948 and joined Merrill Lynch until purchasing Southern Investment Co. in 1967 and became Stock Exchange member. In 1975 he joined a management consultant firm until retirement in 1989. Still maintains a private pilot's license. Married the former Nancy Isenhour and has three children: William H. III, Jan Lee Cellucci and Bobby, and five grandchildren.

MARION R. KARECKI enlisted June 5, 1939, and joined the 2nd Inf. at Ft. Sheridan, IL as rifleman. Transferred to the 13th Armd. Regt. (L) Cav. at Ft. Knox, KY as a 1st class gunner; transferred to the 46th BG (L) at Louisville, KY, as an armorer gunner; then to the 47th BG (L) at Tunis, Africa as an armorer gunner.



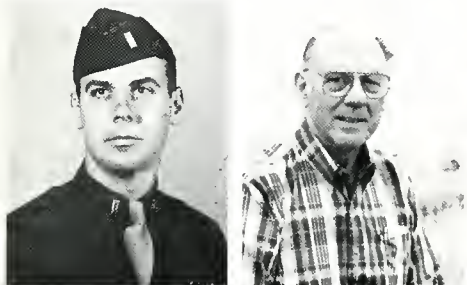
Flew 50 missions with the 85th and 97th Sqdn. and was glad to get back from Sciacca Air-drome on July 4, 1943, and Sicily on July 8, 1943.

Discharged on Aug. 26, 1945, as a staff sergeant, at the end of WWII; and again on Nov. 1, 1952, as a tech sergeant at the end of Korean War. He was awarded the Air Medal, EAME Campaign Medal, American Defense Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal, WWII Victory Medal, Korean Service Medal, UN Service Medal, American Campaign Medal and National Defense Service Medal.

Married Marilyn and they have 12 children:

David, Beth, Kay, Jean, Mary, Stephen, Paul, Ellen, Sue, Amy, Richard, Janet; and five grandchildren: Amber, Chad, Abby, Ingrid and Harry. He worked as a mechanical design engineer from 1946-1988.

DONALD L. KESTER, born on May 7, 1920, in Takoma Park, MD. Graduated South-eastern University in 1941; enlisted in the USAAC in September 1941; and graduated ACOCS in May 1942 as 2nd lieutenant. Graduated Aircraft Observers School in December 1942; joined the 47th BG in Tunisia in 1942 and completed 52 missions as a bombardier/navigator.



Returned to the States in 1944; graduated from pilot training in April 1945; and was released from active duty in November 1945. Joined ANG, Andrews AFB, in 1948 and served as air commander, 113th TFW Air Tech. Det., 1958-75. Served on several active duty tours as AF-CAP liaison officer, Alaska WG CAP, 1951-53; commander, 113th AB Gp., Andrews AFB, 1961-62; and commander of 113th CS Gp., Myrtle Beach AFB, 1968-69.

Retired as colonel with 34 years of service. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with two OLCs, Legion of Merit and AF Commendation Medals.

Married Fern Almquist in June 1944. They have two sons, Donald and Kenneth, and two grandsons, Stephen and Daniel. They all reside in the Pittsburgh, PA area.

ROBERT A. KIEFER, MD, born on July 20, 1916, in Baltimore, MD. He was commissioned 1st lieutenant at ROTC Western Maryland College in 1937 and graduated from the University of Maryland Medical School in 1942. He entered the USAAF on July 16, 1943; assigned to Westover Field, MA at the Station Hospital in September 1943; and joined the 47th BG at Goldsboro, NC as flight surgeon of the 86th Sqdn. in August 1945. Sent to Lake Charles AFB, LA as group surgeon of the 47th BG in June 1946, then was post surgeon at Myrtle Beach, SC until discharged.



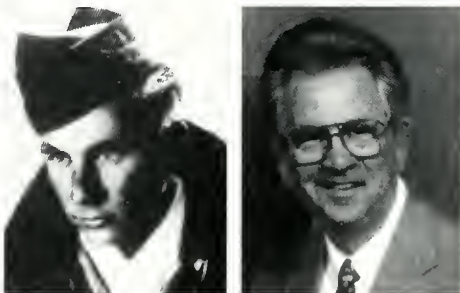
Most memorable experience was being stationed at Myrtle Beach, NC and receiving the most dreadful news he ever received. Six officers from the group, all friends of his and one in particular, Capt. Joseph Beauclair the one pilot he loved to fly with, were sent to California to do some special flying for the USN; on completion they were flying back to Lake Charles in a

four engine USN bomber, and about five minutes after take off, the plane blew up without warning and killed them. That was a very black day for him, he loved his pilots and would do about anything for his squad.

Discharged in June 1947 with the rank of major.

He practiced medicine in Blue Ridge Summit, PA. and retired in 1986. He passed away on Sept. 10, 1989.

ZANE KINN, born on Feb. 21, 1921, in Sunbury, PA. Enlisted in the USAAC on June 4, 1941; was assigned to the 47th BG in August 1941 and stayed with the 47th BG until WWII ended. Served in the Occupation of Germany (Berlin Airlift) and was called out of the Reserves for the Korean War.

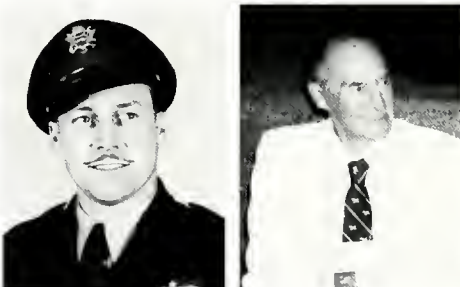


Kinn achieved the rank of tech. sergeant and was awarded two Presidential Unit Citations, American Defense Medal, American Campaign Medal, EAME Campaign Medal, three Bronze Battle Stars, Silver Battle Star, WWII Victory Medal, Occupation of Germany Medal and several Good Conduct Medals.

Worked for the US Postal Service as a mail carrier for 20 years, retiring on Sept. 2, 1988.

Married Ann Stigall on July 17, 1948, and has three sons: Richard, Jerry and Robert (Brad) a captain in the USAF and served in Desert Storm and is now a special agent at Robins AFB; and two grandsons, Joshua and Zachary. His activities include church work, nursing service as a volunteer, museum work and lecturing at schools.

FREDERICK J. KNORRE JR., born on May 24, 1916, in San Francisco. He completed more than 26 years of active and Reserve federal service. He flew 20 combat missions with 150 combat hours, and earned seven Bronze Stars for campaign participation and was also awarded the French Croix de Guerre avec Palme.



While serving with Rome Air Material Area, which was the culmination of his military career, he was awarded the AF Commendation Medal.

Retired from service in October 1963, with the rank of colonel. His awards also include the distinguished Flying Cross with first OLC and Air Medal with second OLC.

He and his wife, Evelyn, have one son and two daughters; four grandsons and one granddaughter; and three great-grandsons and one great-granddaughter.

CHARLES T. KOLBECK, born on July 11, 1914. He enlisted on July 26, 1943, and was stationed as an airplane mechanic gunner on an A-20 at Seymour Johnson Field, Goldsboro, NC.



His memorable experience was mission 12B when an upper gunner kicked his seat chute and it opened inside with the hatch open. He struggled with his chute to keep from going out the open hatch, while dropping surrender pamphlets.

Discharged on Nov. 21, 1945, with the rank of sergeant. Awarded the Bronze Star, EAME Ribbon, American Theater, Good Conduct Medal, Victory Medal and Air Medal.

Worked as a chauffeur, short order cook, etc., and for Grumman Aerospace where he worked on Lem that landed on the moon.

Married Elvera and they have two children, Carol and Linda; five grandchildren: Peter, Charles, Kathren, Laura and George; and seven great-grandchildren: Brian, Peter, Melissa, Chuckie, Sara, Amanda and Dylan.

JOHN L. KOOIKER, born on Nov. 13, 1918, in Hull, IA. Graduated high school at Boyden, IA in 1935; attended Dunwoody Institute, Minneapolis, MN, completing a two year course in auto mechanics; spent one year in special training in carburation at Carter Carburetor. Joined the USAAC in December 1940 and completed six months training at Spartan School of Aeronautics in aircraft mechanics. Assigned to the 85th Sqdn., 47th BG at Fresno and temporarily assigned to a small group to maintain B-18s at Sacramento for submarine patrol. The 47th moved to Will Rogers Field; then to Greensboro, NC, their last base before departing overseas.

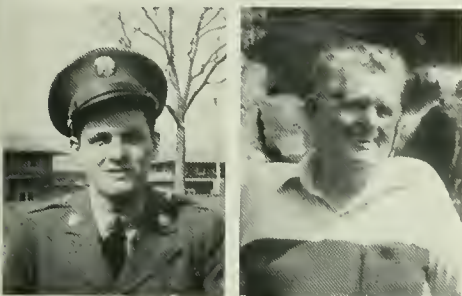


Kooiker was with the advanced echelon to England on *Queen Mary*, in the fall of 1942. He flew in C-47s to Casablanca; through the North African Campaign, Malta, Sicily, Italy, Corsica, Southern France, back to Italy until the end of the European War.

Discharged at Ft. Smith, AR as master sergeant. He was awarded the Bronze Star.

Graduated from the University of Minnesota with electrical and mechanical engineering degrees. Owned a precision machine shop until sold in 1992. Started flying in 1965 and still fly's Beechcraft Baron and Cessna 206 on floats. He enjoys fishing and his cabin in Canada. Married Minnie Hickerson in 1942 in Oklahoma City. They have three children and nine grandchildren.

WILLIAM K. KRUGH enlisted in the service in January 1942 and was assigned to the 47th BG, 84th Sqdn. and attended Harlingen Gunners School.

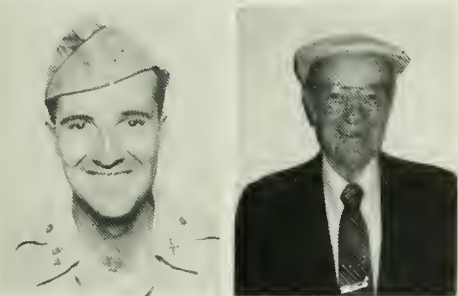


His memorable experience was being able to serve with so many good people.

Discharged in August 1945 with the rank of staff sergeant. Awards include the Air Medal with four OLCs.

Married Ann and they have one daughter Constance Ann and one granddaughter Holly Ann Nadell. He worked as a bus and trolley operator.

THEODORE J. KUHLMAN, born on Nov. 15, 1918, in Telluride, CO. Graduated from Colorado College and entered the Flying Cadet Program in June 1941. Attended Luke Field Class 42-B and graduated in February 1942.



Assigned to the 303rd BG(H); transferred to the 47th BG, 97th Sqdn. in March 1942; and remained with the 47th BG until December 1943 when he returned to the States. He earned the Air Medal and Distinguished Flying Cross.

Entered the University of Denver, College of Law in September 1945 and was admitted to the Colorado Bar in February 1948. He practiced law in Denver, CO until retirement in December 1988. Activities include membership in Denver and Colorado Bar Associations, American Bar Association and order of Daedalians, the National Fraternity of Military Pilots.

Married Jean M. Hunter on May 4, 1945, and has three sons.

GEORGE R. LAND, born around 1918 and raised in South Carolina; graduated The Citadel in 1941 with commission as 2nd lieutenant, field artillery. He transferred to the Air Corps and received navigators rating from Hondo AFB in November 1942. Joined the 84th Sqdn. at Youks

Les Bains in North Africa as bombardier and navigator.

Was shot down in a plane piloted by Ted Broman on an early mission over enemy airdrome and narrowly escaped after being trapped in a crash landed plane that was being strafed by enemy aircraft.

Land was killed in action by German flak on a subsequent mission shortly after returning to duty. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, posthumously, for remaining at his post and accurately bombing his target though mortally wounded.

DONALD DALE LEWIS enlisted in the service on Dec. 15, 1941, and was assigned to the 97th Sqdn., 47th BG at Hammer Field. His military stations were Sqdn. HQ, Fresno, CA; Will Rogers, Oklahoma City, OK; Greensboro, NC; Casablanca; FM Africa; Telegt; Constantine; Algiers, Tunis; Sicily; Foggia; Naples; Rome; Corsica and Southern France.



Served with the 12th TAC; HQ CO, General Saville from Southern France to Germany; returned to France in December 1944 for the Battle of the Bulge.

Discharged on Oct. 10, 1945, with the rank of corporal. He received the Good Conduct Medal, American Campaign Medal and the EAME Campaign Medal.

Worked in life insurance from 1946-49; was lighting fixture retailer, product design, manufacturer and lighting consultant for 36 years, retiring in 1988. He is a 3rd degree mason, rotary president, chairman and founder of "Tim Richards Foundation" for crippled, school athletes, designed and manufactured first 12 volt garden lighting, kit form, and has traveled, worked and spoke in every state (except Alaska).

Married Raymonde Andree in France on June 16, 1945, and raised a beautiful family. They have two children, Jean Pierre and Cynthia Andree; and three grandchildren: Aimee Christine, Lisa Andree and Jennifer Ann.

ROBERT J. LEWIS, born on May 3, 1921, in Cleveland, OH. Enlisted on July 1, 1942, and stationed at Kent State (CPT); glider pilot (November 1942-March 1943); cadet, March 1943; graduated Pilot School, January 1944; went to Italy for combat with the 47th BG in July 1944 and flew 65 combat missions.

Discharged in August 1953 with the rank of captain. He received the Air Medal with five clus-



ters, Distinguished Flying Cross and Airlift Medal (C-54s).

His saddest time was when he had tower duty and his best friend (Bob Smith) took off on a mission. Lewis told him, "Good luck, I'll see you later." When Smith didn't come back, Lewis took his plane, *Nightmare* (unauthorized), and looked all over the Alps for him, but couldn't find him. He will never forget him, he was a great guy.

Employed in the automobile business for 32 years. Married Mary Frances Farnell, and they have six children: Robert Jr., Debbie, Greg, Lisa, Tim and Gary; and 16 grandchildren: Lindsay, Reagan, Jason, Chris, Carly, Jourdan, Jacquie, Jeffrey, Mike, Nick, Jenny, Shauna, Adam, Aaron, Ashley and Brittany.

STEPHEN LIPSKI, born on Feb. 10, 1917. Entered the service at Ft. Dix, NJ, in November 1942; Keesler Field, MS, for AM&E Schooling; and Lockheed Factory School on P-38s. Arrived in Oran Algiers on Dec. 24, 1942, and assigned to the 11th Air Depot Gp. and the 38th Air Depot Gp. Transferred to the 47th BG, 84th Sqdn. at Vesuvius Field, Italy, and flew 59 combat missions as engineer gunner. Targets were over Abby at Casino, Anzio, Brenner Pass and Southern France invasion. On his 59th mission he was wounded on target at Po River.



Discharged on June 23, 1945, with the rank of staff sergeant. His awards include the Air Medal w/3 clusters and the Purple Heart.

Married and has three sons, he worked for the Cadillac Company for 17 years and as a real estate broker for the next 16 years. Presently in the military surplus business with his wife Pearl and three sons. His interests are traveling and being a member of the VFW, DAV and AFA.

DARRELL G. LOCHTE joined the 86th Sqdn, 47th BG(L) at Ataviano air strip in Italy on Jan. 14, 1944, as a replacement pilot. The historic Anzio Beachhead landings commenced on January 22. He flew his first combat mission that day in support of the landings. They bombed the beachhead area on many later missions.

The 47th surprised him. The aircraft were A-20B's and he had come from training in



clearnose A-20C's and hardnose A-20G's with a rear turret, flown at minimum altitude. The 47th's operations were conducted at medium altitude, each of the four squadrons putting up six ships in a box formation and bombing off of the lead ship of the box. The lead ship carried a bombardier and two gunners in the rear while the other five ships carried only the rear gunners. The reason for flying the B-models was that it had 10 internal bomb stations where the later models had only eight.

These aircraft had other field modifications and not all of the squadrons had exactly the same equipment. Some, including the 86th, carried four 50 caliber machine guns poked out of holes punched in the plexiglass nose and twin 50 caliber guns firing in the upper gunner's position while other aircraft's had only one 50 caliber weapon in the rear position.

Late in March 1944, Mount Vesuvius erupted and they had to evacuate the strip at Ataviano. They moved to Capodichino at Naples and flew from there for almost a month before returning to Ataviano. The night of their move to Capo a German bomber bombed the field. The bombs were right on target but failed to explode, and rumor was that French workers had defused the bombs. More likely a green bombardier failed to arm them.

Completed his combat tour just before the break out of the Anzio Beachhead with 52 missions. Having been overseas for less than six months, he was transferred to Mediterranean Air Transport Service for duties as a ferry pilot until rotated home in January 1945.

ROY P. LOISELLE, born on Dec. 4, 1924, in Saginaw, MI. Graduated Arthur Hill High School in January 1943; enlisted in March 1943 and attended basic training at Miami Beach, FL; Airplane Mechanics School, Seymour Johnson Field, NC; Aerial Gunnery School at Ft. Myers, FL; and graduated as flight maintenance gunner in June 1944.



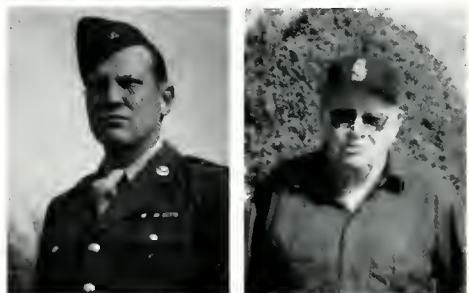
Departed the States on Sept. 22, 1944, with a new A-20 from Savannah, GA, Hunter AFB and flew the southern route to Italy via Puerto Rico, British Guiana, South America, Natal Brazil, Ascension Island, UK, Monrovia, Liberia

Africa, Algeria, Tunis and Naples Italy. Arrived on Sept. 6, 1944, assigned to the 97th BS, 47th BG and flew 44 combat missions in Northern Apennines, Po Valley and Balkans. Departed Leghorn, Italy on June 25, 1945, on the USS *Williamson* and arrived in the States at New York on July 12, 1945.

Honorably discharged on Nov. 5, 1945, at Bear Field, Ft. Wayne, IN, with the rank of staff sergeant. Awarded the EAME Medal, Air Crew Wings, Air Medal w/2 OLCs, Distinguished Unit Badge and Good Conduct Medal.

He worked as a carpenter and contractor until his retirement on Jan. 1, 1986. He still flies his own aircraft. Married Marie on Jan. 15, 1966, and has one son Matthew; one adopted son Mark; and four children from a previous marriage: Richard, Arria, Pierre and Sally; two grandsons; and one granddaughter.

WALTER D. LOWE, born on Oct. 27, 1914. Enlisted on April 1, 1941, and joined the 91st Obsn. Sqdn., Pine Camp, NY; and transferred to the 47th BG, Greensboro, NC.



Discharged on Sept. 29, 1945, with the rank of staff sergeant.

Member of the Masonic Order Shrine El Katif Temple and other benevolent and military organizations. Retired in 1975 from Consolidated Freight Ways, Bulk Commodities Div., as a driver, with 30 years of service and two million miles.

WARD MACAULEY, born on Dec. 30, 1923, in Richmond Hill, NY. He entered the USAC in October 1942 and after Syracuse CTD was classified at San Antonio Classification Center for pilot training. He was reassigned as a bombardier cadet and reported to pre-flight at Ellington Field. After Pre-Flight and Aerial Gunnery School commenced 18 week Bombardier-Navigator Program in Big Spring's Class 44-6, graduating April 29, 1944. Assigned to A-20s as a bombardier-navigator and served as lead navigator for flight of A-20s that flew to North Africa.



Joined the 85th BS, 47th BG (L) in Italy. After initially flying day missions the group was assigned to single ship night operations. He pioneered night intruder bombing missions, how-

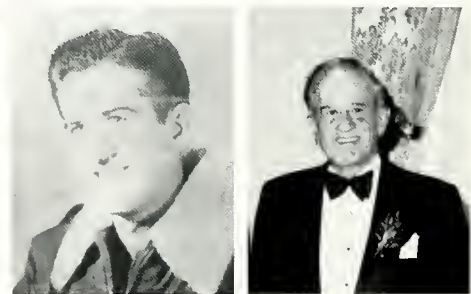
ever, after several missions it was recognized that the Norden Bombsight was of little use for night operations and it was removed from all aircraft and replaced with the British Mark IX. He flew 53 combat missions.

Separated from the service in November 1945, entered business and was recalled for the Korean War. He served as a B-29 squadron observer, 512th Sqdn., 376th BW.

Retired as a colonel in 1974. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal (three clusters), Presidential Citation (two clusters) and Medaille de la France Liberee.

He retired in 1990 as College Dean, School of Business.

ED MASTERLEO, born in July 1923, in Seneca Falls, NY. He attended basic training in 1943 at Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis, MO and Squaw Valley, CA. AM School, Lincoln, NE, and Gunnery School, Las Vegas, NE (MOS 748). Assigned to an A-20 crew at Columbia, SC, then assigned to the 97th Sqdn., 47th BG in August 1944. Flew out of Corsica, Italy and Southern France. He bailed out over PO Valley, Italy, where he was hit by flak and lost an engine in December 1944.



Located and fought with the Partisans, he was captured and escaped (as a Partisan). In need of medical attention (wounded, diphtheria and frost bite), he returned to the Allied Forces in January 1945.

Discharged with the rank of technical sergeant. He was awarded the European Theater Medal with two Battle Stars, Purple Heart and Air Medal.

Married Naomi (Penny) Harold of Newman Grove, NE in 1946, and have three sons: Douglas, Mark, Larry, and a daughter-in-law Melissa. Graduated from the State University of New York in 1953.

Worked as a field service engineer from 1953-67 for Taylor Instrument Company; self-employed, 1967-88, in engineering, service and sales of industrial instrumentation and retired in 1988.

DENVER J. MATNEY, born in 1923. He enlisted in June 27, 1941, and was assigned as an



airplane armorer gunner. He flew 52 bombing missions with the 47th BG (L) and 11 bombing missions with the 97th BG (H).

Departed from the States on Jan. 14, 1943, and arrived at NATO on Feb. 28, 1943. He departed NATO on Feb. 4, 1944 and arrived back in the States on Feb. 13, 1944; departed for ETO on Dec. 23, 1944 and returned on Jan. 18, 1945; departed ETO on June 15, 1945, and returned to the States on June 28, 1945.

Discharged on July 4, 1945, with the rank of technical sergeant. He was awarded the EAME Ribbon with seven Bronze Stars, American Defense Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Air Medal with four OLCs (with 47th BG) and one OLC (with 97th BG).

Married Doris Cyphers and has a son Jack. His wife passed away on Jan. 18, 1993. He worked with the postal service for 31 years and retired in 1984.

LOWELL E. MCCUEN, born on Feb. 12, 1923, in Nappanee, IN, and graduated from Nappanee High School in 1941. Enlisted in the USAAF on June 6, 1942, attended basic training at Keesler Field, Biloxi, MS and was assigned to the 27th BG, 16th BS, Key Field, Meridian, MS. Sent overseas on Dec. 12, 1942, and landed at Port of Mero El Kebir on December 26 and went to Nouvian.



Transferred all A-20s to the 47th BG and trained as aerial gunner; transferred to Rabat Replacement Center; went to the 47th BG, 84th BS in 1943 at Cape Bon with his pilot Capt. Gene Vance. His first mission was on July 6 and he finished 53 missions over Sicily, Italy and Rome Arno before coming back to the States in March 1944.

Discharged on Oct. 8, 1945, with the rank of staff sergeant. His awards include Aerial Gunner Wings, Air Medal with two OLCs, two Overseas Bars, EAME Service Medal with three Bronze Stars and Air Offensive, Europe, Sicily, Rome and Arno.

Married Verdell on March 17, 1945, and they have two children, Jerry and Denise and three grandchildren: Melissa and Natalie McCuen and Blake Jagers. Worked in the wholesale and retail grocery business as a store manager for Minyard Food Stores from November 1961-February 1986 and retired in 1986. He is a member of the First Baptist Church, Masonic Lodge, 32nd Degree Mason and other organizations.

GEORGE C. MCELHOE, born on Jan. 25, 1915, in Swan Lake, WA. Graduated Snoqualmie, Washington High School and spent two years at the Univ. of Washington. Entered Cadet Class 41-A Feb. 7, 1941; 17th BG, McChord Field, WA; and in May 1941 assigned to the 84th BS, 47th BG and moved to Fresno, CA in August 1941.



After Pearl Harbor he flew several coastal patrols; transferred to Will Rogers Field in February 1942 and final training in A-20s at Greensboro, NC. Flew the North Atlantic ferry route; reached Youks Les Baines, Algeria; and participated in 17 missions before returning to the States with cadre to form another A-20 group. His plans changed and he became squadron commander RTU group at Charlotte.

Separated from the service at Ft. Lewis, WA, in August 1945. He was active in the USAFR at Eugene, OR and Bakersfield, CA and retired with the rank of lieutenant colonel in 1968.

Finished his BS and M.Ed. degree at the Univ. of Oregon in 1955 and taught high school science. He retired from teaching in 1975 in Bakersfield, CA.

Married Annette Bynum on Sept. 4, 1941, in San Antonio and they have one son and two daughters. He and his wife now live in Arvada, CO.

ROBERT L. MCKOY enlisted in the service on Oct. 7, 1940, attended boot camp at Jefferson Barracks, MO and was assigned to the 47th BG. He military locations include McCord Field; Fresno; Oklahoma City; Greensboro; the invasion of Africa; Italy; and France.



His memorable experience was living through the war enabling him to enjoy a good family life and work in the Baptist Church.

Discharged on Oct. 1, 1945, at Goldsboro, NC. He received several service medals and one Silver Star.

Married Eleanor Lewis and they have five children: Ginger, Carol, Robert, Joe and Mark; and 11 grandchildren. He worked as a Metropolitan Life Insurance agent at Aero-Atlanta Airport and retired as a tool and dye maker for Holan Corp., Griffin, GA. He is thankful to have been a member of the 47th BG.

CHARLES B. MGRDICHAN (MAC), born on Sept. 23, 1919, in western Pennsylvania. He was drafted into the Coast Artillery Corps in July 1941, volunteered for the Air Corps in October 1941 and was assistant intelligence officer, 85th Sqdn., in August 1942, at Greensboro, NC. He served with advance echelons in En-

gland, and Morocco, from September to December 1942; Tunisia, January 1943; then Malta, Sicily and Italy.



Was ordered back to the States in May 1944 and was assigned to the train troop carrier crews until his separation in October 1945. He spent more than 20 good years in the USAFR, achieving the rank of lieutenant colonel.

Married Gladys Black of Greensboro, NC in 1946 and they have two children and two grandchildren. He is a graduate student (GI Bill) and research assistant at the University of Chicago, 1945-1948; personnel officer, city of Chicago and Los Angeles Schools for about 30 years. His current interests and efforts are toward consensus creation for social improvement. Not fighting, but listening, thinking and working. Many fine traditions of this nation justify hope.

FRANK J. MILATZO SR., born on July 13, 1911. He enlisted in the US Army in October 1931 as a charter member of the 47th BG at McCord Field, WA as an enlisted bombardier. He served with the coastal patrol from Dec. 8, 1941-January 1942 in B-187s Douglas two-engine bombers. From Mitchell Field and Sacramento Airport, he transferred from Group to B-17 group from Rogers Field (all five bombardiers transferred).

Flew 30 missions in B-17s and B-24s in the CBI Theater with the 7th BG, 10th AF. Received his commission to 2nd lieutenant in July 1942 in India. Retired on Aug. 31, 1958, with the rank of major and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal.

Married Josephine and they have two children, Frank Jr. and Francis Anne, and five grandchildren. Worked at Lawrence Livermore Lab under the supervision of the Univ. of California for 11 years and now lives in Livermore, CA.

JOHN MOHNASKY, born on Feb. 28, 1923, in Nesquehoning, PA. Enlisted in the USAAC on June 21, 1941, and assigned to the 97th BS, 47th BG in September 1941 and stayed with them until his discharge in August 1945.



Re-enlisted in December 1949 in the USAF and retired in February 1966.

Married Christine Bruner Spear in April

1956 and has one son, two step-sons, 10 grandchildren and one great-granddaughter. He worked for the US Postal Service from March 1967 until retiring in November 1987. His activities include fishing, walking, volunteer work, church and American Legion.

GERALD MOLLET enlisted in the US Army on Feb. 2, 1942. Arrived at Oran, Africa on Jan. 26, 1943. Graduated from AM School at Sheppard Field, TX and attached to the 114th Sqdn. at Kings Cross on May 10, 1943. Transferred to the 47th BG at Souk-Arba on May 28, 1943.



Discharged on Sept. 29, 1945, with the rank of sergeant.

Married Edna Gilomen on Dec. 4, 1945, and has four children: Wayne, David, Dale and Eldon, and 10 grandchildren. Worked for an implement dealer for two years, then farmed (grain and livestock) in the state of Illinois until retirement in 1980.

ROBERT A. MONTIVERDI enlisted on Dec. 9, 1942; served in the Pacific Theater, 1944-1947, and in the Reserves, 1948-1950. He was recalled in 1951, 1253 AT SQ 1600 ARG to 1600 ATW ATLD MATS to 1708 Ferry Gp. MATS CNTLO to HQ, 47th BW. Deceased Dec. 17, 1957, Weisbaden, Germany.

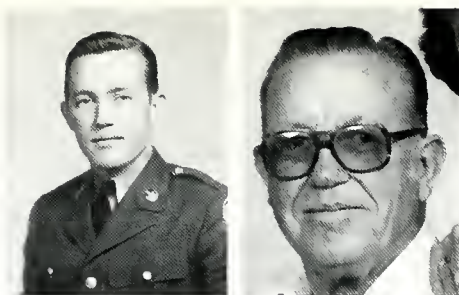
He loved flying and never scratched an aircraft; he flew both bombers and fighters (single and multiple engine aircraft). Awards: Dominican Republic (Wings), honorary service, champion golfer, and attaining the rank of captain.

Married Gloria Boccini on Dec. 26, 1948, and had two children, Mark and Donna; and five grandchildren: Christopher, Jonathon, Steven, Bryan and Matthew.

ARCHIE D. MULL, born Feb. 3, 1918, Howe, OK; graduated from Merced HS, Merced, CA; and enrolled in teachers college, where he was drafted during WWII.

Enlisted in the USAAC in November 1940 in Tulsa, OK; transferred to Kelly Field, TX, GHQ; assigned to the 77th BS, 42nd BG, 11th AF and went to Armament School, Sub-Machine Gun School and Bombardier School. June 1942 changed to 406th BS, 42nd BG, 11th AF, Elmendorf Field, AK and pulled coastal patrol during the Aleutian Campaign.

Returned to the States, May 2, 1943; reassigned to the 51st BS, 46th BG, 3rd AF (L), Will Rogers Field, OK; left for the ETO, March 31,



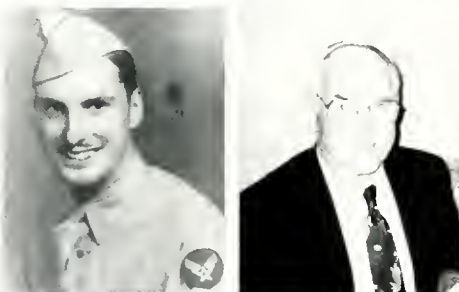
1944, with the 97th BS, 47th BG, 12th AF; and in April 1944 joined the 97th BS just south of Naples, Italy. On his 53rd mission he was shot down over northern Italy (near Pievapelago) and taken prisoner by the Germans. Liberated at the end of the war in Europe.

Honorably discharged in November 1945 after five years of service and awarded the Air Medal w/3 OLCs and the Purple Heart.

Married Evelyn Riley on Sept. 25, 1943, and has one daughter Denise and one grandson Anthony (Tony) Curtemen, both of Sweet, ID. Retired from the Idaho State Tax Commission in June 1982.

He is member of the Masons, Scottish Rite Bodies, Shriners, American Legion, VFW, Good Sam RVers.

ROBERT R. MURPHY, born Jan. 24, 1922. Enlisted in the USAAC on Nov. 25, 1940, and graduated Radio Operator and Mechanics School at Scott Field.



Assigned to the 47th BG, 85th BS, McChord Field, WA in August 1941 and moved to Fresno. They had no aircraft and used a Stearman PT-17 to log their monthly flying time. As a radio operator he was on D/S to Los Banos, CA before and after Dec. 7, 1941, monitoring coastal radio traffic, later to Tucson and Albuquerque, air searching for several flight groups of P-40s lost in area mountains.

Crewed an AA gun on liberty ship during African invasion, landed November 1942 at Casablanca; went through Africa to Malta, Sicily and Italy. While at Naples Airfield, he and several other enlisted men, were trained and flew as bombardiers-navigators. Left the 85th at Civitavecchia in August 1944 and finished his tour at Lincoln, NE and Kirtland Field, NM as a B-29 radar mechanic.

Discharged in September 1945 with the rank of staff sergeant.

Married Ardis and they enjoy sailing their 33-foot cruiser, foreign travel and photography. They have three daughters, a son, nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Worked until retirement as a radio engineer for Motorola and General Electric in Michigan and San Diego, CA.

HOWARD T. NANCE, born May 22, 1916, in Springfield, MO. He enlisted in the US Army in 1936; transferred to USAAC in 1941; assigned to 1st Obsn. Sqdn (ala NG) 1941; OCS graduate 2nd lieutenant (AF), August 1942; assigned to 86th, 85th Sqdn. as assistant intelligence officer; group headquarters as personnel officer and assistant group adjunct. Returned to the States in July 1945.



Graduated from CIC and OSI Schools; OSI commander at Goose Bay; returned to the States to Williams AFB as air police officer. Air Police Sqdn. commander and base and wing provost marshal.

Retired from the USAF after 23 years of service on Oct. 1, 1959, with the rank of major.

Graduated from Arizona State University with BS and masters degrees; later accepted as Ph.D. candidate at Sacramento State University, but dropped out of the program to continue teaching at a local junior high school; and retired after 17 years in June 1978.

Married Earthel Christine Taylor on Feb. 6, 1947, and has three daughters. Since retirement, he keeps busy with civilian activities and is a member of various clubs and organizations.

CHARLES ALEXANDER NELSON, born on April 22, 1922, in Warwick, OK. He served as a pilot in A-20s and A-26s in Italy and flew 39 missions.

Married Mary Jane Bennett Nelson and they have two children, Charles Alexander Jr. and Carol Jane Nelson Adams. 1st Lt. Nelson passed away on April 10, 1995.

JOHN J. NEUER (JACK), born on Oct. 15, 1921, in Wilmington, NC; graduated high school in 1938; two years at North Carolina State Univ.; entered West Point in July 1940 and graduated with wings in June 1943. B-25 transition at Mather Field, assigned to the 416th BG and transferred to the 46th BG.



Flew an A-20J over the southern route; arrived with the 47th BG and assigned to the 84th Sqdn. in February 1944. Served as assistant operations officer in the 84th Sqdn. and Group. Helped develop procedures for bombing under control of ground based radar. Commanded the

97th briefly in early 1945, then was group air inspector. Completed 50 missions and three AMS. In June 1945 he flew an A-26 back to the States.

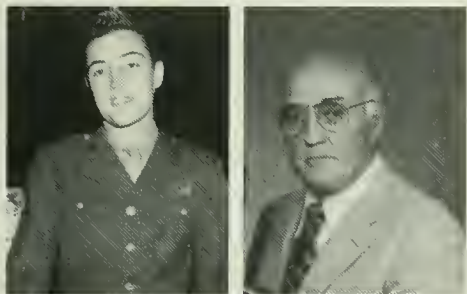
Taught chemistry at West Point, 1946-1951; AC&SS; MSc nuclear physics, Ohio State, 1951-1953; two years at Los Alamos; two years associate professor of physics, USAFA; three years CIA in nuclear weapons intelligence; Kirtland AFB and Sandia Base, 1961-1969, in nuclear weapon effects research and testing.

Retired in August 1969 with the rank of colonel. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal.

Joined Lockheed Missiles & Space Company and designed and operated hardware for DOD nuclear weapons effects tests at the Nevada Test Site. Retired in September 1988.

Married Jean Norton at Mather in 1943 and has three children and two granddaughters. He is currently busy with model railroading.

GEORGE C. NIGHTINGALE, born on July 27, 1924, in Valparaiso, IN; graduated high school, Oak Park, IL, June 1943; and entered the USAAC as an aviation cadet in pilot training in August 1943. Washed out of Pre-flight School, San Antonio, TX due to nasal blockage which prevented high altitude flying. He was assigned to and completed Aerial Gunnery School, Ft. Myers, FL. Flew stateside with 2nd Lt. Robert C. (Tiny) Damen (pilot), F/O Charles C. Collins and Cpl. R.A. Walker at Florence AFB, SC.



Departed for overseas on Dec. 8, 1944, via Morocco to Grosseto, Italy. He was assigned to the 47th BG, 86th BS as airplane armorer gunner (upper turret), A-20 and A-26 and completed 43 bombing missions over North Apennines and Po Valley.

Separated from the USAAC on Nov. 17, 1945, at Chanute Field, IL with the rank of staff sergeant. Awarded the American Theater Ribbon, EAME Ribbon with two Bronze Stars, Good Conduct Medal, Air Medal with two OLCs and WWII Victory Medal.

Graduated in June 1952 with a BS degree in mechanical engineering, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, IN. He retired in June 1982 from McGill Mfg. Co., research and development, Bearing Div., Valparaiso, IN.

Married his high school sweetheart, Lorraine Basso, on Nov. 4, 1944, Florence, SC, AFB Chapel. They have four daughters, three sons, 11 grandchildren and Vizsla hunting dog, Brandy. He is a member of St. Paul Catholic Church, Valparaiso, IN.

RICHARD C. NIMS SR. (DICK), born on Jan. 22, 1916, he enlisted on March 26, 1942; served 20 combat missions; stationed at North Africa, Sicily with the 47th BG, 84th BS.

His memorable experience was working

with the handicapped in his civilian field.

Discharged on March 27, 1945, with the rank of staff sergeant. He was awarded an Air Medal with OLC, Purple Heart Medal and Crew Member Badge.

Married Ula and they have two children, Richard Curtis Jr. and Linda Lou Reed, and one grandson, Curtis Jay Nims. He was active in the Orthotic and Prosthetic field from October 1945-1975.

ERLE D. OAKES, commissioned Aug. 5, 1942, and joined the 47th BG that month. Assigned to headquarters as an assistant group adjutant and later transferred to the 84th Sqdn.



Went overseas in September 1942 and remained there with the 47th until July 1945 when he returned to the States with the rank of major.

Left the 47th as group adjutant and was discharged at Ft. Leavenworth, KS in September 1945.

HAROLD F. OLSEN, born Oct. 17, 1920, Davenport, WA. Received BA from Washington State College; ROTC 2nd lieutenant USAAC, June 1942. Active duty as adjutant with 97th Sqdn. in Oklahoma City, June 1942. With 13 men he landed at Port Lyautey, Morocco on the morning of Nov. 8, 1942, by assault boat.



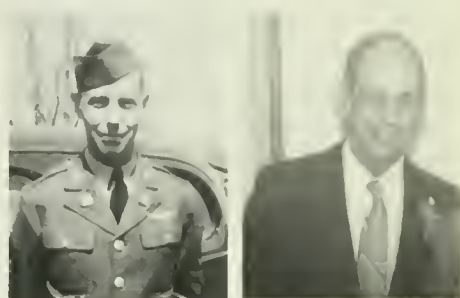
Awarded the Silver Star for participation in assault on the Kasbah on November 10. Served as executive officer of 97th to rank of major throughout North Africa, Sicilian and Italian campaigns. Returned to States in July 1945 and released from active duty September 1945.

Received LLB from Harvard Law School in January 1948. Lawyer with Perkins Coie Stone Olsen & Williams, Seattle, WA and predecessor firms from 1948 to 1989. Managing partner, 1978-1988, and currently counsel, Perkins Coie. Served as chairman of the board, trustee and director of numerous civic/professional organizations.



Has three children: Eric, Ronald, and Margaret, and four grandchildren.

CLINTON W. OLSON, born Feb. 14, 1919 at Hendricks, MN. Graduated Canby High School. Attended business school in Minneapolis, MN.



Entered USAAF February 1942. Completed Airplane Mechanics School, B-24 Factory School for flight engineers, and Aerial Gunnery School. Assigned to 47th BG in 1943 as flight engineer on Lt. Charles Barr's crew and completed 50 bombing missions. Awarded Air Medal with OLC.

Married Iona Hendrickson Sept. 21, 1944 upon returning from overseas duty. Assigned to Sioux City AB and lived with Iona in Sioux City, IA. Worked as mechanic on B-17s and on B-29s. Discharged September 1945 as staff sergeant.

Worked in three General Motors dealerships in Minnesota for 39 years as mechanic, parts manager and service manager until retiring in 1984.

He has four children and five grandchildren.

Presently resides in Litchfield, MN in the summer and spends winters in Mission, TX.

EARL H. OYLER, enlisted May 2, 1942, and served as bombardier/navigator. Flying A-20 and A-26 aircraft, he saw duty on the island of Corsica, Italy and in France. Flew 52 bombing missions (all but three were night missions) and all were memorable. Two of his pilots, Lt. Wright and Lt. Luke, were killed in crash landings.



Discharged Oct. 6, 1945; awards include the Air Medal w/2 OLCs and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Graduated from Utah State Univ. in Logan, UT. in air conditioning and refrigeration. Worked 25 years at Morton Thiokol, building rockets for the space program.

Married, he and Jennie have four children: Kathy, Stephen, Michele and Scott; and 10 grandchildren.

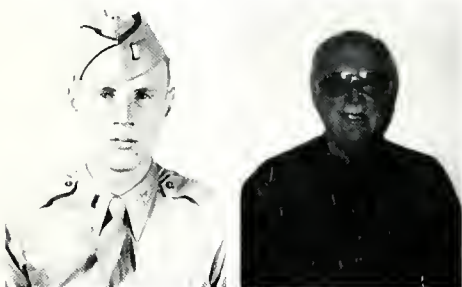
JAMES T. PACE, born Oct. 20, 1928, in Charlotte, NC. Enlisted in the Army in August 1946. Entered aviation cadet (pilot training) in 1947 and graduated as a 2nd lieutenant in Class 48-B. He

was assigned to Biggs Field, El Paso, TX. Grounded from flying in 1949 due to Lewis Johnson cut in 1949, but was reinstated to flying status in 1950.

Sent to Keesler Field, MS to Radar and Electronics School in 1950 and while there met his future wife Joyce. Both were transferred to Hamilton Field and were married there on April 7, 1951. He was sent to Okinawa on remote tour, but flew rescue missions for downed pilots for three months in Korea; was stationed at various stations in the US and Japan; and in 1962 was released from the USAF due to passovers.

In 1963 he started working for different contractors in the space program. Retired from the 138th Avn. Co. (Army Reserve) in 1988 as a captain. He had two children and four grandchildren and resided on Merritt Island, FL until his death, Sept. 5, 1991 in Orlando. Joyce still lives on Merritt Island, FL.

RALPH F. PAIGE, enlisted April 18, 1943. Assigned 1943-1944 (WWII) in the North Atlantic with antisubmarine duty as 2nd lieutenant/bombardier and Emerson nose turret gunner on B-24s. Cross-trained to bombardier/navigator in B-25s then into A-26s with the 47th BG after group converted from A-20s. Flew as B/N on Capt. Howard Mills' crew until mid-1946.



Separated from Air Force, attended and graduated from University of Pittsburgh only to be recalled for the Korean Police Action and flew as navigator on B-29s mostly with FEAF, SAC and Alaska Air Command. While assigned at Edwards Flight Test Center, he flew as test navigator and through some quirk in the personnel computer was assigned as base director of security and law enforcement to fill vacancy created by sudden, unanticipated medical retirement of the incumbent BDSLE. Pulled directed duty assignment in ROTC at University of Pittsburgh and earned master's degree while there.

Called back to SAC as chief, Security/Law Enforcement after doing overseas assignment at Osan, Korea, also in the S/LE career field. While serving as base chief S/LE was moved to SAC HQ (IG) as chief. Law Enforcement and remained there until his retirement in January 1969 as lieutenant colonel.

Awarded the WWII Victory Medal, AF Commendation Medal and Korean Service Medal.

Married Carolyn in July 1947 and has three children: Ralph Jr., Barbara and David, and four grandchildren: Melissa, Peter, Jenny and Becky.



WILLIAM G. PAYNE, born Sept. 21, 1916, Cross Plains, TX. Graduated Texas A&M, 1938. Drafted in USAAC on March 6, 1942; applied for and attended OCS, graduating as 2nd lieutenant. Attended Observer and Gunnery Schools before departing from the States, Feb. 28, 1943.

Joined 84th BS, 49th BG in Tunisia. Flew 39 missions as bombardier and grounded Feb. 10, 1944. Assigned as intelligence officer (IO) and returned to the States in July 1945 as a captain. Request granted for release from active duty. He received the Air Medal and two OLCs.

Recalled in 1951 and served one year as IO with 67th Recon Gp. in Korea. Assigned IO duty at Air War College for three years; August 1956 began serving three years as XO at HQ USAF Europe Current Intelligence Section; promoted to major. In September 1959 assigned HQ USAFSS San Antonio, various classified duties.

In 1963 reported to 6986th Radio Group Mobile at remote site in northernmost Japan, served as operations officer; July 1964 went to Defense Intelligence Agency, the Pentagon and promoted to lieutenant colonel shortly after. Retirement was requested and granted in September 1968 after 21 years of active duty.

KENNETH C. PHISCATOR, born Aug. 7, 1921, in New Troy, MI and was working for Clark Equipment Co. as assistant traffic manager when he enlisted in the USAF in December 1941. After basic training he attended Boeing School of Aeronautics, then North American School. Went to Oran in North Africa in January of 1942 as a replacement and assigned to RAF Sqdn. that was converting to US A-20s. Was then assigned to 47th BG, 85th Sqdn. in April and remained there until transferred from Corsica back to the States to help on B-29 development.



Sent to Nebraska and worked on engine development, later assigned and put in charge of a crew that went all over the States to fix grounded B-29s and get them back into flying status (was best job in Air Force). He was discharged in August 1945 and returned to Clark Equip. Co. as assistant traffic manager for a short time, then left to go to work at The Bendix Corp. in South Bend, IN.

Married Margarette in 1950 and has four grown children: Linda, Patti, Mark and Stacey, and six grandchildren: Shelley, Heather, Chrissy, Melisa, Nicole and Colton. Retired in 1982 from Bendix as superintendent of material, and since then has served on City Council and as mayor of Buchanan, MI, where he has lived for 65 years.

ROYAL V. POPE, born Feb. 20, 1920. Enlisted in June 1942 and served with the 86th Sqdn., 47th BG as bombardier/navigator. Discharged in September 1945 as tech sergeant.

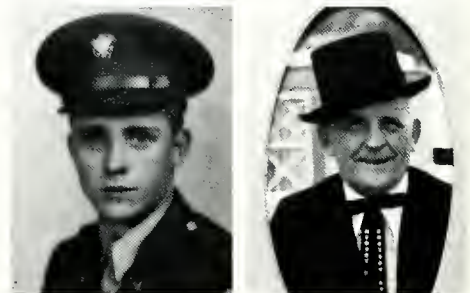
Re-enlisted in July 1947 and served with

98th BG, Carswell AFB and Fairchild AFB as central fire control gunner in B-29, and at March AFB, CA as base procurement officer. Discharged in September 1964 as chief master sergeant.

Completed 65 missions and received the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal w/2 OLCs.

Earned BS degree in 1962 from California St. Pomona and MS in 1967 from Southern California Univ. From 1969-82, associate dir. and dir., Univ. Library, Univ. of Arkansas.

BRUCE PORTER, born Dec. 19, 1922. Entered the Service on Aug. 29, 1942, at Huntington, WV. Participated in battles and campaigns in southern France, North Apennines and air combat in Balkans and Rome-Arno.

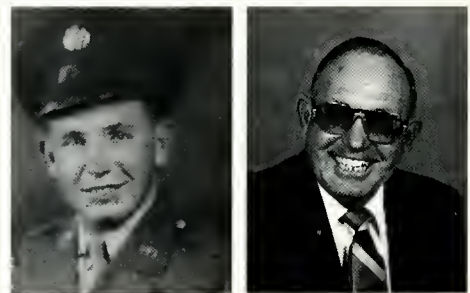


Discharged from the service on Oct. 14, 1945, at Camp Beale, CA. Awards include the Air Medal w/OLC, EAME Service Medal and the Good Conduct Medal.

Worked as a self-employed plumber; was in charge of transportation maintenance for Grayson Rural Electric in Grayson, KY and retired in 1985. He was a member of City Council before becoming mayor of Grayson (1970-76); was a former deacon of First Church of Christ in Grayson, KY; member of Trimble Masonic Lodge 145 in Grayson; El Hasa Shrine Temple in Ashland, KY and member and former commander of VFW Post 3705 in Grayson.

Married June Montgomery on March 9, 1946, they have three children: Roy Edward, Marlene and Ruth Helen; four grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

EARL PORTER, born March 28, 1924, in Winfree, TX. Drafted into the USAAC on June 7, 1943, and sent to San Antonio, TX, then to Wichita Falls, TX for infantry training. Went to Gunnery Schools at Lowry Field, Denver, CO; Yucca Field, AZ; and Florence, SC. Was shipped out of Newport News, VA on July 9, 1944.



Fought battles and campaigns in North Apennines, Po Valley, Rome-Arno, Central Europe, North France, Southern France and Rhineland.

Airplane armorer and gunner chief, he flew

with crew of Jay Sauter, Bitsko and Dismuke. All four returned home. Discharged Aug. 11, 1945, he was awarded the EAME Campaign Medal with seven Bronze Stars, Air Medal w/3 OLCs and Good Conduct Medal.

Married Marian Payne on March 21, 1952, and has one daughter, two sons, and five grandchildren.

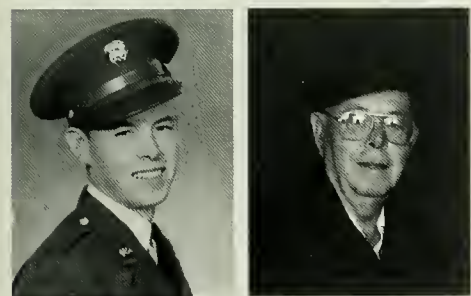
Moved to Mont Belvieu, TX in 1953 and worked in oilfield, pipefitters local, owned and operated (with sons) Porter & Sons Plumbing. He served as city councilman for six years, mayor for one term and county commissioner for eight and a half years. Retired Dec. 31, 1992.

J.W. QUICK, S/Sgt., was born April 27, 1923, in Rutherford, WV. Enlisted May 26, 1941, in the USAAC and fought battles in North African Campaign, Sicily and Italy, flying 60 missions.

Awarded the Purple Heart, Air Medal with one Silver and two Bronze OLCs, Good Conduct Medal, NAETO Campaign Ribbon with Battle Stars. Discharged in July 1945.

Married and has two daughters. Served as councilman and mayor, city of Jeffersonton, KY; director of Public Works, city of Louisville; director of Traffic Engineering, Louisville and Jefferson County, KY and currently vice-president, Evans/Griffis Inc. Consulting Engineers.

THOMAS A. RATTS, born July 5, 1919, Indianapolis, IN. Attended Consolidated Business College, two years. Drafted June 27, 1941, and assigned to the 86th Sqdn. Served in the Group Personnel Office, August 1941 until discharged Sept. 16, 1945, through both reorganizations as personnel classification and status reporting, mechanized morning report; Group Personnel sergeant major (limited).



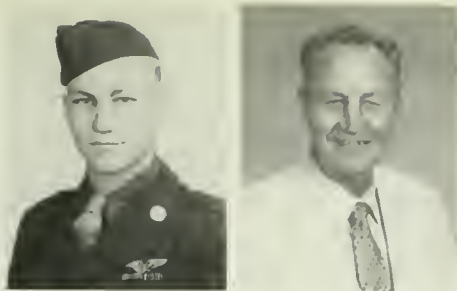
Self-employed for 10 years and returned to the Air Force as civilian accountant in 1956, transferred to the Defense Supply Agency in 1964 and took part in the development and implementation of their Standard Automated Material System. Retired in Weisbaden, Germany 1977.

Married Ruth Keen Jan. 19, 1947, and has two daughters, Janet and Sue; two grandchildren, James Thomas Davis and Christine Ruth Davis.

JAMES E. RAYL, born September 1919, Swedeborg, MO. Enlisted in the USAAC in November 1940; completed Airplane Mechanic and Aerial Gunnery Schools and assigned to the 47th BG in April 1943 as aerial engineer-gunner. Completed 50 missions and returned to the States until re-assigned to flight duty on C-47s in the Philippines.

Awarded three Air Medals, EAME Campaign w/3 Battle Stars, Korean Campaign, two Battle Stars and Presidential Unit Citation.

Returned to civilian life and worked for



Springfield City Fire Department. Enlisted in Marine Reserves and activated August 1950 for duty in Korea as infantry machine gunner. Returned home in 1951 and stayed in military reserves until age 60. Retired, he was a field rating representative for insurance services office for 25 years.

Married Jean Gaffga in November 1952 and has two children, Douglas and Elaine. He and his wife are involved in church activities, VFW, volunteer work and travel occasionally.

CLYDE RECHT, inducted on June 26, 1941, and sent to Camp Grant, IL. From July 2, 1941-May 11, 1942, he served with the 76th BS, at Gowen Field, ID and from June-May 1942 at McChord Field, WA. On May 16, 1942, he was sent to Air Force OCS; commissioned a 2nd lieutenant, then assigned to Greensboro, NC as a technical supply officer. Was sent overseas to England in October 1942 and promoted to 1st lieutenant.



Recht remembers his voyage to England on the *Queen Mary*, where he was assigned a cabin suitable for two, but housed 18 officers (they slept and ate in shifts). Assigned to the 12th AF, he spent his first Christmas away from home in Algeria. Served in the battle of Kasserine Pass where his unit won a Presidential Citation.

Baptized a Roman Catholic in Troia, Italy and attended by his favorite chaplain, Fr. Edwin Czeslawski, and God-fathered by a dear friend from Detroit, Timothy Cruice, who was then with the 15th AF and stationed in Casablanca. He attained the rank of captain before leaving Italy.

Returned to the States on the USS *America* in early May 1945. Returned to college at the Univ. of Michigan and went to work for the Ford Motor Co. where he remained until his retirement in 1984, having advanced to the title of senior manager.

Married Shirley Jodt in June 1945 and following her death in 1984, married Ione, an old friend of Shirley's. He has two children and five grandchildren.

DONALD M. REED, born July 25, 1921, in Slippery Rock, PA. Studied engineering at Grove City College and entered the Aviation Cadet Pro-

gram on Nov. 6, 1941, graduating as 2nd lieutenant with a pilot rating on July 3, 1942

Was squadron officer with the 27th BG(L) from August to November 1942, Harding Field, LA; squadron officer and operations officer of the 47th BG(L), at Florence, Columbia and Shaw AAF, SC; Military Air Mission, Peru; and base operations officer, Yontan AB, Okinawa.

Reverted to inactive status in July 1947 and had several civilian occupations including owning and operating a restaurant; various positions with an insurance company and was branch manager of the Zurich-American office in Grand Rapids, MI, when he returned as full-time Commander of the 758th Troop Carrier Sqdn. at the Greater Pittsburgh Airport and was later base commander of the AF installation there.

Returned to civilian life; joined the 375th Troop Carrier Wing; recalled in 1950 for the Korean Conflict and assigned to Donaldson AFB, SC and Langley AFB, VA until released from active duty in July 1952. Served at McGuire AFB, NJ until his retirement on Aug. 1, 1972.

Awards/Medals include the Legion of Merit, Air Medal w/4 clusters, PUC, AF Commendation Medal; Purple Heart, American Defense Service Medal, American Campaign, EAME Ribbon w/3 stars; WWII Victory Medal, Occupation Medal, National Defense Service Medal, AF Reserve Medal, Vietnam Service Medal and Air Force Longevity Service Medal with one cluster.

Married July 29, 1944, to Eleanor Davies and has two daughters, Donna Lynn and Cheryl Anne. Eleanor is deceased. Upon retirement he became VP of a Pittsburgh real estate and insurance company until 1984 when he started his own insurance agency which he sold in July 1993.

JESSE R. REED, enlisted Oct. 28, 1940, attended Airplane Mechanic School, Chanute Field, IL; assigned as maintenance tech. and stationed in the States, Africa, Italy, Sicily, Malta, France and Corsica as crew chief, flight chief and master sergeant.



Awarded the American Defense Service Medal, American Theater Service Medal, EAME Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Distinguished Unit Badge and one OLC.

Employed with Texas Department of Public Safety as state trooper for 33 years. Married to Margaret Westman and has two children, Harriet Reed Cuthall and Stanley C. Reed, and four grandchildren: Caley and Reed Cutshall and Robert and Jenny Reed.

SALVATORE RIZZO, enlisted Feb. 25, 1942. Served as munitions worker in Aberdeen, MD. Discharged July 12, 1945 with the rank of corporal.

His memorable experience was when his

sergeant picked him to speak Italian in Sicily to find fresh fruits and vegetable for their outfit and fresh eggs for the Officers Club in Catania.

Awarded the Distinguished Unit Badge, EAME Service Medal and the Good Conduct Medal.

Employed as sales clerk. Married to Giovanna and they has daughter Dianna and two grandchildren, Kelly and Christopher.

JOHN H. ROBINSON, entered the service on Sept. 1, 1941, as a 2nd lieutenant infantry. Went through pilot training on the West Coast Class 43-I, B-25 training at Sacramento, CA and A-20 RTU at Charlotte, NC.

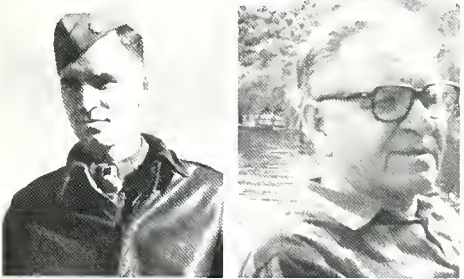
Joined the 47th BG at Vesuvius near Naples. Was assigned to the 84th Sqdn. and later based at Grosseto, Corsica, Southern France, back to Italy, then home.

Flew 60 missions. The ones he recalls most vividly were Bologna, Genoa, and a mission to Pescara. The two gunners on his crew were Chalek and Richard Carlin, both of New York.

His decorations include the ETO Ribbon with four stars, Air Medal with two clusters and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Farmed for 37 years and after retiring took up golf. Married for 50 years and has one daughter and two grandchildren.

ORVILLE E. ROBINSON, born Nov. 7, 1918 in Normal, IL. Enlisted in the USAAC on Sept. 29, 1939. Completed pilot training in 1941, Class of 41-A. Assigned to 17th BG and placed in the 47th BG upon it's formation. Served in the 86th Sqdn. and later in Group HQ. Left the service in December 1945 with rank of major.



Spent 35 years with National Supply Div. of ARMCO, Inc. in credit management. Currently active in physical fitness activities and the management of a physical fitness club.

Married Janet Dunsmore in July 1941 and has four children (one deceased) and four grandchildren. Currently resides in Houston, TX.

WILLIAM R. ROLLINS (BILL), enlisted Sept. 10, 1941. Attended Armament School, Lowry Field, CO. October 1941-March 1942; assigned to the 47th BG, 86th BS, Hammer Field, Fresno, CA, March 1942-to June 1945.

Discharged June 15, 1945, as corporal. Awarded the Good Conduct Medal, American Defense Medal, EAME Campaign and Distinguished Unit Badge w/2 clusters.

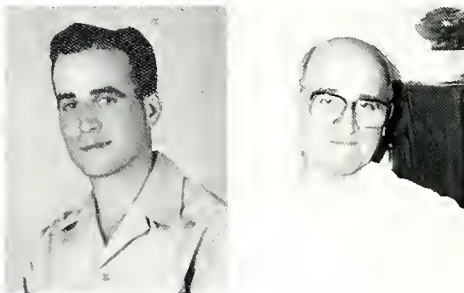
Spent 30 years in Federal Civil Service,

Defense Department, USN ammunition and explosives supervisor. Hawthorne, NV and Seal Beach, CA.

His memorable experiences include 30 months in North Africa, Malta, Sicily, Italy, Corsica and France, January-February 1943; living underground at Youks Les Bain, Algeria; and March-April at Thelepte, Tunisia.

Married Beatrice and has four children: Bill, Jack, Scott and Steve, and seven grandchildren: Scott, Richard, Kerry, Erin, Adam, Malina and David.

JOSEPH A. ROTONDO, born Sept. 7, 1916, Pittsburgh, PA. Enlisted in the USAAF in June 1941 as an airplane and engine mechanic; assigned to the 97th BS; and participated in battles in Africa, Sicily, Italy, Southern France and Tunisia.



Awarded the American Defense Service Medal, American Service Medal, Distinguished Unit Badge and the Good Conduct Medal.

Discharged as a sergeant from Ft. Dix, NJ in August 1945. Worked as an aircraft mechanic at the 911th TAC Unit, Greater Pittsburgh Airport from 1955-71. Joined the USAFR in 1958 and retired as master sergeant in 1971.

Married Rita Aragonese in September 1942 and has two daughters and two grandchildren.

ARTHUR B. RUDRUD, enlisted Sept. 19, 1941. He went to boot camp at Jefferson Barracks; Airplane Armor at Lowry Field, CO. February 1942; assigned to 97th Sqdn., 47th BG in Fresno, CA.



Arrived in Africa in November 1942 at Casablanca, then went to Algiers (where a general was assassinated), to Thelepte, Tunisia.

Discharged Sept. 9, 1945, with the rank of staff sergeant. His awards include the American Theater Ribbon, EAME Ribbon w/Silver Battle Star and three Bronze Battle Stars, five Overseas Service Bars and one Service Stripe.



Married Carol and has three children: Alan, Kathryn and Mary. Grandchildren are Randy and Eddy Pontius; Brenda and Brian Meyer. At 75 he is still farming.

WM. B. RUTLEDGE, inducted into service March 27, 1943, Ft. McPherson, GA. Attended basic training at Keesler Field, MS; New Orleans, Delgado College; AM and Gunnery School, Tyndall, FL; and AIT at Charlotte, NC.



Departed Hunter Field, Savannah with Lt. Conroy and a new A-20 plane for Italy. Landed in Rome and assigned to 97th Sqdn. 1st mission on July 2, 1944, and last mission, March 23, 1945. Shot down on 56th mission and landed on abandoned airstrip. Plane was repaired by him and some Australian guerillas. After three days they flew their plane back to squadron. Crew members were pilot, Lt. Conroy; gunner, M/Sgt. Hank Brown; bombardier, Lt. Sam Carter; engineer, S/Sgt. Wm. B. Rutledge.

Discharged Sept. 26, 1945, Ellington Field, TX. Awards include the Air Medal w/3 OLCs, Theater Ribbon, four Battle Stars and Good Conduct Medal.

After 35 years retired from Southern Bell Tel & Tel, Atlanta, GA as business service manager.

Member of American Legion; three years on advisory board at Peach Tree Dekalb Airport; Mason; member United Methodist Church, Chairman of Board and lay leader.

Married to Inez and has three children: Judy, Janie and Anita, and two grandchildren, Jason and Lydia.

HAROLD A. RUTTER, enlisted Jan. 10, 1942. Stationed with 47th BG and participated in the European Theater as squadron engineering officer.

Discharged as captain, Jan. 3, 1946, and awarded the Soldier's Medal.

Rutter has been employed as insurance company safety engineer for 40 years and is the owner of a plumbing and heating company.

Married to Dorothea and has three children: Stephen, Judy and Jacqueline, and grandchildren Jocelyn, Hanna and Dillan.

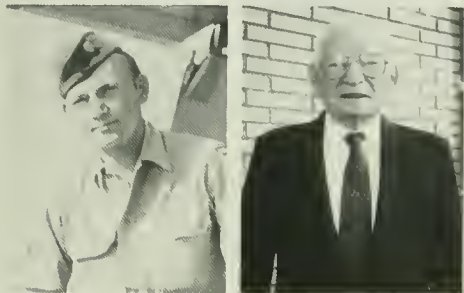
JOSEPH M. RYAN, enlisted June 10, 1941. Attended boot camp at Hamilton Field, June 1941; August 1941, Hammer Field; Fresno assigned 20th Recon Sqdn., Will Rogers Field; Africa, Sicily, Italy, Corsica and Southern France. Returned to Italy on Sept. 2, 1945. Re-enlisted June 6, 1951, and retired June 1, 1967.

His memorable experience includes Thelepte and North Africa.

Ryan is a computer operator, mountain climber, and graduated from the University Puget Sound and is a private pilot.

Married to Mary and has one daughter, three sons, four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

KENNETH L. SALSURY, born Jan. 17, 1918, Scenery Hill, PA. Graduated East Washington High School, Washington, PA. He and his brother Harold were members of Co. K, 110th Inf., 28th Div., PANG when federalized Feb. 17, 1941, and stationed at Indiantown Gap, PA. They took a short discharge from the Guard and enlisted in the USAAC June 25, 1941, and assigned to 20th Recon. Sqdn., 47th BG.



Attended Aircraft Armament School in Denver, CO, Nov. 28, 1941-Feb. 28, 1942. There he met Lillian Hager and they were married Feb. 28, 1942.

Left the States Sept. 4, 1942, for the ETO by way of *Queen Mary*; arrived September 11 and left the ETO Nov. 27, 1942; arrived MTO Dec. 6, 1942, and left MTO June 27, 1945; arrived in States July 12, 1945.

Received the Soldiers Medal, Bronze Star Medal, Distinguished Unit Badge w/8 Battle Stars, American Service Medal, American Defense Service Medal and EAME Service Medal.

Discharged as staff sergeant Aug. 30, 1945. Graduated from Bliss Electrical School in May 1946. Employed by Bell Telephone Company of Pennsylvania and retired in February 1978 with 32 years service.

He and Lillian have enjoyed 52 plus years together and have one daughter Margaret. There are no grandchildren. His activities include church, school, ambulance service, fire department and local politics. Lillian's activities include church, Girl Scouts, Rainbow Girls, Eastern Star and ceramics.

They now reside in Aliquippa, PA where they built on 22 acres of a beautiful hilltop about six miles from the Greater Pittsburgh International Airport.

AMBROSIO L. SANCHEZ (AL), was born April 26, 1920, in Albuquerque, NM, graduated from Albuquerque High School in 1938 and enlisted in the USAAC on Nov. 11, 1940. Completed Aircraft Mechanics School and was assigned to the 47th BG, 85th Sqdn., at McChord Field, WA in 1941. Joined the 85th Sqdn. at Hammer Field in Fresno as a private first class and promoted to tech. sergeant in 1942, master sergeant in 1950 and chief master sergeant in 1961.

Other assignments included Eniwetok Atoll, Operation Castle 1954-55; 36th Air Rescue Sqdn. 1961-64; Tachikawa AFB, Japan; 62nd Air Lift Wing, McChord AFB, Tacoma, WA 1964-66; and Air Force Special Weapons Gp., Kirtland AFB, Albuquerque NM, 1966-68.

Memorable events include *Queen Mary* ride to England; a flight to Casablanca; French Mo-



rocco war missions in Algeria, Tunisia, Malta, Corsica, Sardinia, Italy and France. These events were accomplished with personal pride as a maintenance crew chief on A-20 and A-26 aircraft in support of the WWII effort.

Service awards and decorations include the AF Longevity Service Award with clusters, Good Conduct Medal with loops, AF Commendation Medal with clusters, and the Air Crew Member's Badge.

Since retiring he has served his community as a member of the Metropolitan Crime Commission and the Bernalillo County Government Ethics Committee.

Family includes his wife Emma, son, daughter and three grandchildren.

He always remembers his service companions with pride.

ARTHURN. SAULINO, born June 28, 1917, Youngstown, OH. Graduated Rayen High School 1935; entered USAAC in June 1941; assigned to 20th Recon Sqdn. and later the 97th BS, 47th BG.



Was in advance echelon to England on *Queen Mary*; in 97th Sqdn. flight to Oran, then to Casablanca shortly after invasion at Port Lautey. Served as tech. sergeant crew chief for entire North African ETO Campaign.

Returned Stateside on furlough. End of war in Europe expedited his honorable discharge in May 1945. Graduated from Ohio State Univ. in March 1950 with BIE. Spent 10 years in construction and 25 years in the foundry industry as quality control engineer.

Married Mary Rose Stematz, RN, on Aug. 16, 1947; she passed away in 1989. He has three children and one grandchild. Member Chesterton Club, VFW, OSU Alumnae and Triangle Engineering Fraternity. Retired in 1982.

WILLIAM E. SAULT, born June 2, 1918, Alameda, CA. Enlisted in the USAAC in June 1940. Graduated as 2nd lieutenant in class 41-A. Assigned to the 17th BG(M) McChord Field, WA. May 1941 assigned to the 47th BG(L). Transferred with the 47th to Hammer Field, Fresno, then on to Will Rogers Field, OK.

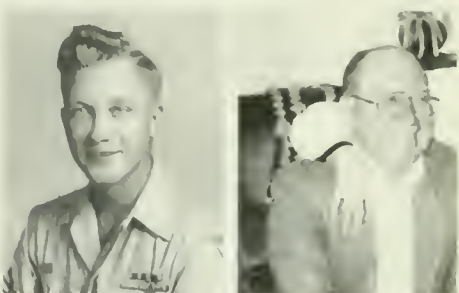
Assigned to the 305th BG(H) in March



1942 as commander of the 33rd Recon Sqdn., later the 422nd BS(H). Flew B-17s for three years over Europe and at the end of WWII was deputy commander of the 40th Cbt. BW(H) as a colonel. Spent the next 21 years in the Air Mat. Cmd. Retired in 1966, and employed at General Mills Inc. in Minneapolis for 10 years.

Married Kathleen Eastman March 5, 1941, and has three children, two now deceased. Presently residing in Minnetonka, MN.

LLOYD M. SELEEN, graduated from Heron Lake HS in May 1940. Enlisted in the service on Jan. 2, 1941, with duty as a mechanic and was discharged Sept. 28, 1945, as a tech sergeant.



After the service he farmed from 1945-60 and worked for Toro Mfg. from 1960-86. Seleen was a member of the Methodist Church and Masonic Lodge.

Married LaVon Hecker on Nov. 12, 1946, and they had two children, Michael and Patricia, and three grandchildren. Lloyd M. Seleen passed away on June 21, 1993.

THOMAS WARREN SEXTON (TW), born Feb. 1, 1916, Belleville, IL. Enlisted in the USAAC on Nov. 17, 1942. Assigned to 84th Sqdn. in January 1942, assigned to duty in Operations Section. Transferred to 47th BG, HQ, Intel. Section prior to going overseas in November 1942. Discharged as tech. sergeant on Aug. 25, 1945.



Moved to Los Angeles, CA in October 1945 and worked for IRS, retiring in June 1975.

Married Marian Conroy on May 20, 1942, and has three children and six grandchildren.

JOHN SHARP (JACK), enlisted as aviation cadet in July 1941. Served in 56th Sqdn., 46th BG, January 1942, Eng. Off., 85th Sqdn., 47th BG, October 1943, group personnel equipment officer.

Stationed in Casablanca November 1942; Sicily, Malta, Italy, Corsica, France and Italy. To States in A-26 with Gen. Vance (June 1945). Inactive duty as of January 1946 with the rank of captain.

Engineer with Foxboro, Arthur D. Little, Bolt Berzneck and Newman, Polaroid. Retired in July 1980.

Memorable experiences include the ME-109 shot down over Thelepte, Tunisia (February 1943) from 5,000 feet straight into the ground and the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius.

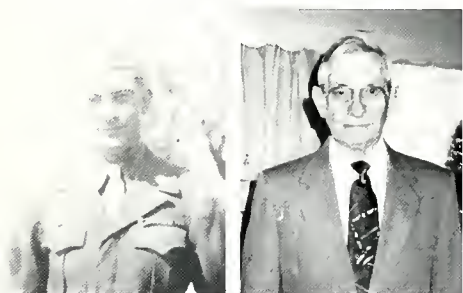
He has been married to Thora since February 1946 and has two sons, John Jr. and Gregory.

JAMES R. SHEPPARD enlisted June 17, 1941. Stationed with HQ&HQ Co., Washington, DC; Hamilton Field, CA for basic; assigned to 85th BS, 47th BG

Memorable experience was going through his first air raid at Thelepte, North Africa. Discharged Sept. 9, 1945, as staff sergeant, chief operations clerk, 85th Sqdn. Awarded the Bronze Star.

Employed with US Steel as craneman in Ohio. He married to Mary Walker and has son James R. Sheppard Jr. and three grandchildren: Jamie, Ben and Jessica.

JOSEPH W. SIMMONS, born Oct. 6, 1919, Wickliffe, KY. Enlisted Oct. 9, 1940. Received recruit training at Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis, MO. Assigned to 86th BS, Squadron Supply in January 1941 and remained with the same unit for the rest of his time in the service. Was promoted to staff sergeant in charge of Squadron Supply 1942.



Went overseas with last echelon of 47th BG; arrived in North Africa in January 1943; from there to Sicily, Italy, Corsica, Southern France and back to Italy. Returned to States by way of liberty ship in July 1945.

Awarded a Good Conduct Medal, American Defense, EAME Theater, eight Battle Stars and Unit Citation w/cluster. Discharged Oct. 2, 1945.

Memorable experiences includes being stationed so near Mt. Vesuvius that when it erupted they had evacuate; visited Rome and the Vatican.

Worked at Atomic Energy Installation, Paducah, KY, 1952-82. Retired and a part-time farmer.

Married to Jessis Leigh who died in 1984. Children Keith Barton and Jan Carol. Married Lunelle Jennings 1986. He has five grandchildren and she has five grandchildren.

ANDREW M. SISK, born Nov. 28, 1921, at Hawkins, WI. Enlisted in USAAF in March 1942. After six weeks basic training, he attended California Flyer's School of Aeronautics for four months; one month at North American Service School; and two months overseas training at Jefferson Barracks.



Went to North Africa with 22nd Repl. Bn. in April 1943 and assigned to RAF 114th Sqdn.; transferred May 1943 to American Group, 85th Sqdn., 47th BG and stayed with 47th until end of war in Europe. Flew back to the States in one of their planes, spent one month in hospital and discharged Sept. 6, 1945.

Married Helen Lazar Aug. 18, 1945. Bought dairy farm in 1946 and farmed until retirement in 1992 at Hawkins, WI. They have eight children: Dennis, Bruce, Andrea, Maureen, Brian, James, Scott, Jerome, and 16 grandchildren.

LOYL W. SKINNER, born Dec. 30, 1922, on a farm northeast of Norman, OK. Graduated Washington High School in 1939, attended Oklahoma Univ. until enlistment in the USAAF in March 1942. Completed BS degree in chemical engineering in 1948.



Air Cadet in Class 43-B, received Pilot and Observers Wings at Brooks AFB, and combat training at Will Rogers AFB, OK.

Joined the 47th BG in October 1943, with six other replacement crews. They followed the group through North Africa, Malta and Sicily before catching them at Bari, Italy. Flew 71 combat missions before rotation because of European invasion. A couple of months after returning Stateside he was awarded the Air Medal.

During the Korean War he was assigned to HQ Research Div., Wright-Patterson AFB, OH. Left active duty in 1952, stayed in the USAFR for 28-years and retired as a lieutenant colonel.

In civilian life he worked as an engineer with the Army Corps of Engineers and the Air Force. After retirement he was a consultant engineer for several years.

Married Jessie Lee Reppond in 1943 at Will Rogers AFB Chapel and has three sons.

GENE SLATER, born June 15, 1918, graduated Univ. of California Agricultural College with

BS degree in 1940. Employed by Swift and Co. Packers at the time of his induction in the 84th Sqdn. as a surgical tech. on Jan. 13, 1942. Transferred to HQ as a dental tech. in May 1943; traveled with the 47th through North Africa, Sicily, Italy, Corsica and Southern France; and returned to the States on May 7, 1945, from Italy.



Received his "Ruptured Duck" September 1945 maintaining his corporal rating upon separation.

Returned to Swift and Co. and after 18 years went to California, where he fed and bought livestock as an order buyer for five years. In 1960 he accepted a position as manager of the California Livestock Production Credit Assoc. Retired in 1978 and did consulting work a couple of years until full retirement in 1981. Since then he has enjoyed traveling, backpacking, boating, fishing and water color painting.

Married Audrey Sellman, Nov. 30, 1947, and has four daughters and a son: Torey Karlin, Sherida Collnon, Patrice Rossi, Adrien Mince and William G. Slater, and seven grandchildren: Brien, Lindsay, Greyson, Natalie, Sherida, Allison and Meagan.

He and Audrey live in Dixon, CA, spend two or three months in the winter in the Imperial Valley and visit Canada for two weeks in the summer. They have been to every state in the Union and to England, Wales, Scotland, Greece and France.

CHARLES O. SMITH, born Nov. 20, 1916, in Toledo, OH. Drafted June 25, 1941. Assigned to the 85th BS, 47th BG, Hammer Field, Fresno, CA. Continental service, one year, eight months and 24 days; foreign service, two years, five months and 14 days. Airplane engine mechanic and electrical spec.



Awarded the EAME Theater Ribbon with eight Bronze Stars, American Defense Service Medal and the Distinguished Unit Citation. Discharged Sept. 2, 1945 as staff sergeant.

Employed as mailer at the *Toledo Blade*. Married to Jeanette and has two children, Margaret Ann and Joanne, and six grandchildren.

CLYDE A. SMITH, born July 27, 1920, in Loveland, CO. Graduated high school and at-

tended one semester at Wyoming University. Joined the Air Corps on Jan. 13, 1941, and went to boot camp at Jefferson Barracks, MO, and Mechanics School at Chanute Field, IL.

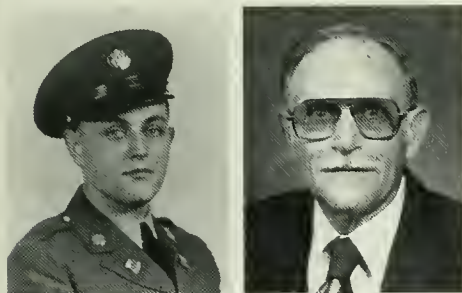


Left for overseas with advanced party on the *Queen Mary*; left England at Lands End to Port Lyautey, to Malta, Sicily, Italy and Southern France. Flew back to the states in formation to Savannah, GA.

T/Sgt. Smith was discharged in August 1945 at Lowry Field, CO, and joined the WYNG, 300th Arty. and served in Korea for 19 months as battalion motor officer. Besides all the usual awards and medals, he received the Bronze Star. Memorable experiences were attending the reunions in Fresno, San Antonio and Long Beach.

Married in 1948 in Pasadena, CA; wife Lillian served in the USCG in Alaska. They have four children: Randy, Mark, Julie and Ross, and eight grandchildren. He says, "It has been one roller coaster ride since 1941, and I have loved every hit of it." He is in the trucking business.

JOHN JOSEPH SMITH, enlisted July 17, 1941. Assigned in transportation as truck driver and stationed in: Naples, Foggia, Rome-Arno, Sicily, Tunisia, South France, Algeria and French Morocco.



Discharged Sept. 13, 1945, as private first class. Awarded six Bronze Stars, Good Conduct Medal, five Overseas Service Bars and Unit Citation.

Smith was employed as salesman for auto parts. Retired in 1983 to Ozark Mountains of Arkansas. Activities include church, Knights of Columbus and VFW. Enjoys traveling, especially to visit children in Illinois and Colorado.

Married to Wanda and has two children, Sherry and Paul, and four grandchildren: Jennifer, Sarah, Michelle and Matthew.

ROBERT K. SPURGIN, born Nov. 1, 1918 in Jones County, TX. Graduated from Anson HS in 1936. Enlisted 1941 in the USAAC at Brooks Field, San Antonio, TX. Joined the 22nd Observation Sqdn. and transferred to DeRidder, LA in January 1942. Transferred to 86th BS in August 1942 and went overseas in January 1943.

Returned to the States in July 1945, mar-

ried in September and moved to Pasco, WA in October. Stayed until November 1946 when he came back to Texas and re-enlisted. When he left the service he worked in oil fields until 1959. Attended TV and Radio School and stayed in TV service until 1975 when he retired.



His first wife was killed in a car accident. He remarried and went to Fort Worth in May 1959. He has two sons.

ELMO E. STEELE, born June 24, 1921. Entered service Sept. 9, 1942; trained at Keesler Field, MS; Tyndall Field, FL; Curtis Wright, St. Louis, MO; and Florence AB, SC. He was the only survivor of a B-25 crash on June 3, 1943, and spent two months in hospital.



Later sent to Charlotte, NC and assigned to A-20 crew with Lt. Hossman and Dick Welch. Went overseas to Europe on March 25, 1944. Participated in Rome-Arno, North Apennines and Southern France. Flew 60 missions with 11 different pilots and the 86th Sqdn.

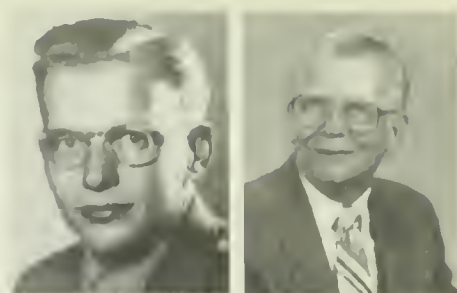
Memorable experience was when put on the battle order on Lt. Durand's crew. He was on the truck ready to go to the field when the operation officer came out and said there was an error and that Cox wanted to fly with his pilot. Steele said, "OK, take me off..." The next morning he asked one of the guys in his tent if Cox had already been to breakfast. The guy replied "he didn't come back last night." Steele was shocked.

Served total time of 37 months and 23 days and discharged Oct. 18, 1945, at Randolph Field, TX as staff sergeant. Decorations include the Overseas Service Bar w/3 Bronze Stars, Air Medal w/2 Bronze Clusters and the Good Conduct Medal.

Presently employed as a jeweler. He married Doris Bottom, March 14, 1943, and has two children, Paula and Gary, and four grandchildren: Andy, Steven, Danny and Ryan.

EDWIN J. STERBA, born March 13, 1919, Chicago, IL, now lives in LaGrange Park, IL. Received BS in industrial administration from Univ. of Illinois and graduate studies business administration, Northwestern University.

Enlisted in Aviation Cadet Program October 1941; 2nd lieutenant communications officer;



Communication School, Scott Field, IL. Assigned to VIII F School, Orlando FL. Assigned to 85th Sqdn., 47th BG, Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma City, July 1942. Arrived North Africa November 1942; Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Sicily, Italy, Corsica, Southern France, Italy and Goldsboro, NC.

Awarded Bronze Star. Was discharged in November 1945 as a major. Employed with custom pharmaceutical manufacturing company as sales, production manager, president and now retired.

Founding officer Parent Teachers Organization; Little League coach; LaGrange Park Library Site Search Committee; Elder, 1st Presbyterian Church, La Grange; Senior Pastor Search Committee; chaired various other church committees; editor of church weekly news letter; and serves on the Board of Directors of the West Suburban Symphony Orchestra.

Married Lydia Smutny in 1948 and has two children, Ronald and Doreen.

THOMAS W. STEVER, enlisted June 1941 and joined 47th Bomb Group August. He was discharged July 1945.



J.D. STRATTON, a reserve officer in private medical practice in Pennsylvania and called to active duty at Ft. Bragg in December 1940. Following boot camp he was ordered to School of Aviation Medicine, Randolph Field, TX, then assigned to 4th Corps Area Aviation Cadet Board, Atlanta, GA.

Sent to Charlotte, NC, Jan. 1, 1942, and worked in the recruiting office until Morris Field Hospital was opened; became chief of EENT and hase flight surgeon.

The 47th BG(L) participated in Carolina Maneuvers summer of 1942. They had no flight surgeon so he was transferred in on Aug. 20, 1942. The Group was divided into several echelons and he was in the advance party that left for Ft. Dix in October 1942, then overseas.

Landed in Casablanca in November about



D+3. After the successful invasion of Algeria, the Group moved to Tunisia, Sicily, Italy, Corsica, S. France, then back to Italy. They were in Grosseto when Germany gave up.

Released from duty, but remained in the USAR and promoted to Colonel. Went to Chicago for a residency in ophthalmology; moved back to Charlotte, NC and had a successful practice until retiring in 1982. Was active in medical society affairs, in his church, and in local politics.

He and wife Hila live in a retirement complex and enjoy a healthy and happy life. They are the proud parents of four children: Anne, Alice, James and Robert.

PAUL S. STRYSON, graduate BSC University of Nebraska, 1940. Attended graduate School until entering service on March 1, 1941. Aviation cadet 1941. Class 42-B, Feb. 6, 1942. Assigned 86th BS March 16, 1942. Stationed at Will Rogers Field, OK.

Went overseas with 86th to Africa, Malta, Sicily, Italy. Returned to the States in November 1943; was instructor WFTC until placed on inactive duty in September 1945.

Achieved the rank of captain and was awarded eight Air Medals.

Supervisor of electrical manufacturing plant for 37 years. Retired in 1985. Married Jean Hughes and they have five children: Paul, Stanley, Leslie, Matt and John, and six grandchildren.

RICHARD W. STURGIS (DICK), born in Detroit, MI, March 22, 1921. Resided in Grand Rapids, MI; graduated Grand Rapids Union HS (1939) and attended Grand Rapids Jr. College one year.



Joined MING in 1939. Left for Camp Beauregarde, LA, October 1941 with federalized NG. Discharged from NG to re-enlist in Regular USAAC in September 1941. Attended Aircraft Armament School Lowry Field, CO. Assigned 47th BG, Fresno, CA, January 1942 and served through WWII with the 47th. Discharged as sergeant Aug. 28, 1945.

Worked briefly for Western Electric Co. and Lear Inc. Retired in March 1983 from Friden Inc. and its successors, after 36 years servicing business machines.

In 1968 married Jonsie Heinig who was Ms. Senior America 1993. He has two children and four grandchildren from a previous marriage.

Has done extensive world traveling and is

an active volunteer in the Second Harvest Gleaners and the Adopt-A-Highway Programs.

MURT J. SULLIVAN, born Feb. 25, 1919, Ft. Worth, TX. Attended Texas Tech, Lubbock, TX, and joined the service in Kelly Field in November 1940. Assigned to the 47th BG, 85th Sqdn., McCord Field, WA. Served with 85th in Fresno, Sacramento, Oklahoma City and Greensboro.



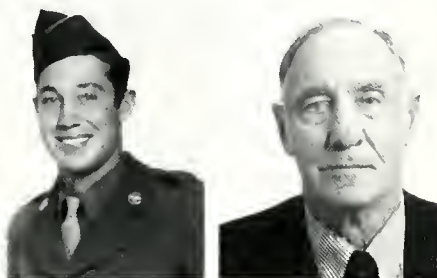
At Greensboro a small number of 47th men were sent to an amphibious combat team commanded by the now famous Gen. Patton. They were assigned to an old banana boat called *The Florence Nightingale*. They bobbed around for 28 days and finally on Nov. 8, 1942, landed at Port Lyautey, just north of Casablanca. Their planes flew down from England and they rejoined the 47th.

"Thelepte in Tunisia." No one in the 85th will ever forget "Thelepte."

On his first trip back to the States he married a Fresno girl, Elwanda Vincent. They have two daughters, one son, seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

He has been a general contractor operating out of Fresno, San Francisco Bay area and Seattle. Now semi-retired.

VERNON LEE SULLIVAN, enlisted June 3, 1943. Joined the 47th BG in July 1944 on Corsica. Moved to Grosseto, Italy and was gunner in A-20 and A-26.



All his 55 missions were memorable. Was awarded the Air Medal and two OLCs. Discharged Oct. 22, 1945, as staff sergeant.

A retired rural carrier, he still farms and is active in the American Legion.

Married June Serles March 6, 1948, and they have four children: Peggy, Carl, Michael and Mark, and eight grandchildren: Todd, Casey, Alecia, Adam, Angela, Jerem, Nicholas and Courtney.

EDWARD E. SVOBODA, born Aug. 31, 1915. Enlisted Jan. 14, 1941, and went to boot camp at Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis, MO, 7th School Sqdn., Air Mechanics, Chanute Field, Rantoul, IL, 47th BG, 85th Sqdn., McChord Field, Tacoma, WA. Moved to Fresno, CA.



Discharged Feb. 22, 1945, with rank of master sergeant. Awarded the Distinguished Unit Badge, American Defense and Good Conduct.

Employed as crew chief, modification line, Tinker AFB, civilian auto repair specializing in general motors. Returned to Postal Service and retired after 26 years on Jan. 18, 1980.

Activities include church, Masons, Shriners (directors staff and circus program), fishing, woodworking. He is enjoying life and retirement.

Married to Sara; no children.

GEORGE I. TALBOTT (GI), born May 2, 1924, in Xenia, OH. Graduated Xenia Central HS in 1942; drafted into Armed services, and after completing course at Army Air Corps Cryptographic School in Pawling, NY, and course at British Cryptographic School in Algiers, North Africa, he joined the 47th BG in Foggia, Italy on Dec. 28, 1943.

Stayed with Group until his discharge on Oct. 12, 1945, at Goldsboro, NC, with rank of sergeant.

Earned BS degree in education at Ohio Univ., Athens, OH in June, 1948; master's candidate at Univ. of Washington, Seattle, WA until June 1949. Moved to San Francisco, CA in 1953; and after 25 years in the Trust Department of The Bank of California, N.A., he retired to Ohio and became active as a director and singer/actor with various community theater groups and colleges. In 1990 he moved to and is currently residing in Corvallis, OR.

BRONSEL F. TARTE, born Aug. 6, 1922, in Rock Hill, SC. Enlisted Jan. 6, 1942; stationed in Fresno; Oklahoma City, OK; Greensboro, NC; North Africa in November 1942; Sicily, Corsica, Italy and Southern France.



Achieved the rank of private first class and was discharged Aug. 22, 1945.

Married to Marcelle Pate on Dec. 1, 1945, and they have one child, Frances Elaine.

CHESTER O. TAYLOR, enlisted Jan. 6, 1942. Attended basic training in Wichita Falls, TX, January 1942. Served with 47th BG, Fresno, CA, and stationed at Will Rogers Field in February 1942. Attended Gunnery School, Harlingen, TX, July 1942.



Left for overseas on Oct. 2, 1942, and arrived in England Oct. 31, 1942 and in North Africa on Nov. 18, 1942. First combat base was Youks Les Bains on Jan. 7, 1943. From Tunisia to Malta, ran bombing missions to Sicily and Italy.

Relieved from duty with 47th and returned to the States. Last assignment was with B-24 Group in Victorville, CA. Awarded EAME Theater Ribbon w/3 Bronze Stars, Purple Heart, Air Medal w/5 OLCs. Discharged Aug. 11, 1945 as staff sergeant.

After leaving the Army, he worked for Railway Mail Service and retired in 1977.

His wife Martha is deceased. They have two children, Linda and James, and four grandchildren: Jason, Heather, Adam and Elizabeth.

FREDERICK REYNOLDS TERRELL, born Nov. 13, 1913, and grew up mostly in Southern California. Graduated from Los Angeles HS, received BS in civil engineering at West Point in 1936. Commissioned a 2nd lieutenant USAAC; graduated Flying School, Kelly Field, TX, 1937, rated pilot.



Flew P-12, P-26 and P-36s in Hawaii 1937-39. Flew B-18A, B-23 and B-25s as Ops. Off., 89th Recon Sqdn., 17th BG in California and Washington States 1939-41; CO 20th Recon Sqdn. February 1941 at McChord Field, WA; CO 97th BS at Hammer Field, CA August 1941 (Fresno).

As a major (promoted Dec. 5, 1941) designated commander Provisional Reconnaissance Force, Dec. 7, 1941 (aircraft: B-18As and later B-24s) for West Coast Ocean Patrol. Designated commander 47th BG (L) January 1942 (aircraft: A-20Cs).

Trained the 47th in the states of Oklahoma and North Carolina. (Lieutenant Colonel May 1942). Led 47th BG with new A-20Bs in squadron formations from US to North Africa via Labrador, Greenland, Iceland, United Kingdom

September-October 1942. Commanded 47th BG in combat operations from Algeria and Tunisia, December 1942-June 1943 when German forces were expelled from North Africa (colonel, February 1943). Commander Task Force of three Allied Light Bomber Groups on Malta for invasion of Sicily (July 1943). Designated senior aid staff officer, and deputy commander, Mediterranean Allied Tactical Bomber Force (July 1943-March 1944) in Sicily and Italy (nine bomb groups in all, DB-7, A-20, B-25 and Martin B-26s, including 47th BG). The battle line then stabilized across Italy South of Rome.

Returned to US April 1944. Transferred to General Staff Corps and assigned to G-3 Div., War Department General Staff in the Pentagon until end of WWII. In November 1945, returned to USAC and assigned to Staff of USAAF's School, Maxwell Field, AL, then became founding member of faculty, Air University, USAF until 1949. Graduated Air War College June 1950. At outbreak of Korean war, assigned to Far East as Deputy for Operations, 20th AF, in Okinawa June 1950-June 1952. Returned to US and graduated National War College, Washington, DC 1953. Assigned to Pentagon and designated senior planner and assistant director, Joint Strategic Plans Group, Office of The Joint Chief of Staff (JCS), 1953-56.

Qualified as jet pilot summer of 1956, assistant commander, then commander, 34th Air Div., North American Air Defense. (NORAD) 1956-58 (Southwestern US). Commander, 6th Air Div., NORAD (Newfoundland, Labrador, Baffin Island and Northern Greenland) 1958-60. (Brig. Gen., 1958) Commander, Air Defense Weapons Center and 73rd Air Div., (Florida Gulf Coast) 1960-62. (Major General, 1962) Commander, 30th Air Div. and 30th NORAD Region (No. Central US and So. Central Canada) 1962-66. Flew North American Sabre-Liner regularly during 1962-66. Chief of Plans HQ NORAD, Colorado Springs, CO and commander NIKE-X Task Force under JCS, 1966.

Major General Regular Air Force with rank from July 10, 1958. Retired, disability 1967.

Decorated: Silver Star, Legion of Merit w/2 OLCs, Bronze Star w/OLC, Air Medal, Commendation Medal with OLC, Presidential Unit Citation.

Member: AF Assoc. (Charter), AF Aid Society (Life), Assoc. of Graduates, USMA (life), Combats Pilots Assoc. (Charter), Order of Daedalians (life), *Who's Who in America* for 10 years 1968-79.

Terrell has resided in Lake San Marcos, CA since 1967.

OSCAR A. THOMAS JR., born April 4, 1919, in Del Rio, TX. Enlisted Jan. 7, 1942, and served in the USAF as airplane and engine mechanic.

Military locations include French Morocco, Tunisia, Sicily, Naples-Foggia, Rome-Arno, North Apennines, Po Valley and Southern France.

Received the American Theater Service Medal, EAME Service Medal with one Silver Star and three Bronze Stars, Service Stripe, four Overseas Service Bars, Good Conduct Medal and Distinguished Unit Badge. Discharged Sept. 29, 1945, at Seymour Johnson Field, NC with the rank of technical sergeant.

Completed 38 year career as maintenance



technician with Texas State Department of Highways and Public Transportation in his hometown, Del Rio, TX and Val Verde County. Retired Nov 30, 1977.

Married Rosemary Fellows in October 1945 and had one son, three daughters, seven grandsons and five granddaughters. He passed away Feb. 6, 1987.

FRANCIE L. TIMM, born Dec. 8, 1918, in Hallettsville, TX. Worked in family business until Dec. 24, 1941, when he enlisted in USAAF and was sworn in on Jan. 1, 1942, at San Antonio, TX. Joined 97th Sqdn. of 47th BG in Fresno, CA. Went to Aerial Gunnery School in Las Vegas and flew northern route to England.



Went by ship to North Africa and landed at Oran; sent by train to Casa Blanca, then to Youks Les Bain Air Field. He flew first combat mission on Dec. 30, 1942, with Gages Airport as target. Pilot was squadron commander, Marion Akers. Was shot down Jan. 4, 1943, in Fondouck area near Kasserine Pass. Wounded in right thigh and awarded the Purple Heart. Received five Air Medals, OLC, EAME Campaign and WWII Victory Medal.

Flew 50 combat missions, returned to the States in December 1943 with rank of staff sergeant. Was offered commission, but declined and was discharged in August 1945.

Returned to family business and later built his own business, a drive-in grocery which was owned for some 10 years before retiring at age 60. He was president of Lions Club in 1954 and is a 32nd degree Mason. Married Hazel Alford July 7, 1946, and has two children Sharon Sue and Allen Ray. Enjoys golf and at present has five hole in one.

CARMEL TORREZ joined the service on Dec. 7, 1940 at Fort Des Moines, IA, at age 19. Sent to St. Louis Barracks for training, then to McCord Field, WA. They were just a small cadre, which he believes was the nucleus of the 47th BG. He was in the HQ Sqdn. and trained as a gunner.

Transferred to Fresno AB in summer of 1941 and picked Dec. 7, 1941, for his furlough, but got no further than Reno, NV due to war with



Japan. Took Chemical Warfare Training, passed and received a certificate and promotion. Went to Will Rogers Field, OK; transferred to the 97th BS and stayed with them for the rest of his service as a member of the Armament Department. Went to North Carolina to Camp Kilmer, NJ.

Sailed to Casablanca, Morocco in January 1943; moved on to Tunisia, Malta, Sicily, Italy, Corsica, Southern France.

Returned to States and upon discharge, it was found that he had contracted tuberculosis. He recovered in about three and a half years and went on into the accounting field from which he retired in 1986.

He has two sons, one is a retired Air Force pilot with the rank of colonel and the other is employed by a laboratory in Los Angeles.

MATTHEW TURKALY (TURK or MATT), born in Beech Bottom, WV. Drafted and entered the service at Clarksburg, WV on April 2, 1942. Participated in battles and campaigns in Algeria, French Morocco, Tunisia, Sicily, Naples-Foggia, Rome, Po Valley, Southern France, etc.



Memorable experiences were seeing the Leaning Tower of Pisa; the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius; when his tent burned and he lost everything; and when discharged they lost his records, so he was not released until four months later.

Served with the 84th BS and was discharged Oct. 8, 1945, as a sergeant. Awards include the WWII Victory Medal, Good Conduct, Bronze Star, Distinguished Unit Badge and others.

Worked as a coal miner; "Turk" passed away Oct. 25, 1982. Survived by his widow Bertha; children: Jack, Bill and Sandra; and four grandchildren (whom he never got to see): Bethany, Kyle, Adam and Jarid.

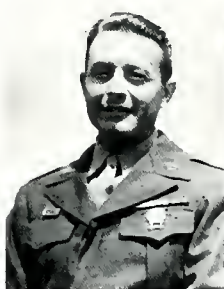
AUGUST UDAL, born Dec. 25, 1917, Tallin, Esthonia. Parents came to America on May 25, 1924, and lived in New York and Connecticut. Graduated Plainfield HS in 1936; enlisted in the USAF on Dec. 19, 1941; and assigned to the 47th BG Communications at Fresno, CA.

Discharged at Fort Devens, MA in August 1945. Worked as experimental machinist with

Pratt & Whitney Div., United Technologies, East Hartford, CT until retiring in February 1980.

Married Katherine Wawer on April 19, 1947, and has three sons: Richard, David and Kenneth, and four grandchildren: Matthew, Steven, Katie and Emily. He loves to travel and has visited 48 states, nine provinces of Canada and parts of Mexico. He now lives in Willimantic, CT.

HAROLD C. VALENTINE, enlisted April 14, 1941. Assignments: airplane mechanic at Hammer Field, Fresno, CA; Curtis Wright Technical School, Glendale, CA; Will Rogers Field, OK; Greensboro, NC. Left from Fort Dix, NJ for overseas duty in Africa, Malta, Sicily, Italy, Corsica and France.



Discharged Aug. 28, 1945. Awarded the Good Conduct Medal, AAF Technician Badge with Airplane Mechanic Bar, Distinguished Unit Badge, American Defense Ribbon, American Theater Ribbon, EAME Theater Ribbon w/8 Battle Stars and five Overseas Service Bars.

Served an apprenticeship in the building trades, and worked in residential and commercial building, then worked over 22 years in the Contra Costa County as carpenter and building inspector. He retired as assistant building services superintendent on July 16, 1974. His hobby is restoring antique autos.

Married Anne Rich on Aug. 13, 1945. They built their home in 1946 where they still live. They have no children.

JAMES L. WADSWORTH, (WADDY), born May 21, 1922, Alamo, NV. Received AB from Brigham Young Univ.; JD from George Washington Univ. Volunteered for USAF in September 1942; activated January 1943; CTD, first class at Ellensburg, WA; pre-flight, Santa Ana, CA; flight training, Class 44-C: Santa Maria, CA; Chico, CA; Douglas, AZ and commissioned 2nd lieutenant.

B-25 transitional at Mather Field; A-20, Florence, SC and trained as second gunner. Instructed formation and instruments. Flew A-20K to Italy, via South Pacific route and joined 95th Sqdn., 47th BG at Grosseto, Italy. Stayed with 47th until separated. Terminal leave started Sept. 26, 1945. Flew with reserve from Hill Field, Ogden, UT. 1946-48. Two 5-year tours with inactive reserve.

Elected in 1948 to Nevada State Assembly; Nevada Representative to Second Hoover Commission; 1949-1953, liaison officer between CAA



and Labor Department-Capitol Hill; administrative assistant to president of Hughes Production (Howard R. Hughes), Hollywood, CA; and Nevada Counsel for Hughes interest, 1971-1978. Retired as district attorney, Lincoln County, NV.

Married Kathleen Vickers of West Virginia in September 1951 and has two children, James Vickers Wadsworth, Euless, TX and Felicia W. Crockett, Panaca, NV, and four grandchildren: Jared, Katrina, Jordan and Chase Crockett.

BURNELL WALKER, born Oct. 7, 1915, Crystal Springs, MS. Enlisted in USAAC on Oct. 9, 1940, and went to St. Louis for boot camp, then to McCord Field. In 1941 sent to Fresno to join the 47th BG then to North Africa.



Received the Silver Star Jan. 9, 1943 and remembers well the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius. Stationed at Mather AFB from 1946-51 when loaned to 17th BG in Korea. Returned to Vincent AFB, Yuma, AZ in 1952.

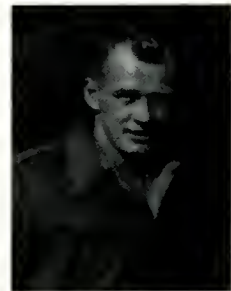
Moved to Itazuki AFB, Japan in 1959 and attached to the 68th Fighter Interceptor Sqdn., then 8 A&E. Returned in 1962 to Portland AFB to an Aircraft Armament Squad and retired in 1965. Moved to McClellan AFB to a civil service job.

Recalled to active duty Nov. 1, 1966, and went to Davis-Monthan AFB for two years. Retired Oct. 31, 1968, and returned to McClellan for final retirement in 1982.

Married Mary Elizabeth Kendrick on June 10, 1942, and has one daughter Mary Lynn and six grandchildren: Andrea, Christopher, Patrick, Jennifer, Stephanie and Elizabeth.

WALTER WALKER, joined the 84th BS at Hammer Field, Fresno, CA. Left the 47th just before they moved to France.

Worked in the supply under Sgt. Rachel until he joined the flying crew as photo gunner. He flew on 66 combat missions before returning to the States. Went back to Will Rogers Field, OK, and was assigned to a B-25 outfit.



VINCENT J. WARGER, born Feb. 13, 1925, Irvington, NJ. Entered the USAF in March 1943; graduated from Flight Engineer School, Seymour Johnson Field, Goldsboro, NC; was accepted for pilot training...when the flight training program closed.

Went overseas with crew: Lt. Russell Stewart, Corona, CA pilot; F/O William E. Smith, Bethlehem, PA "Bombagator;" and Sgt. Jack



Pickard, Greensboro, NC, armorer. Flew 26 missions with 84th Bomb Sqdn. Aircraft started burning on his 6th mission and he hailed out over the Apennines, caught a train to Leghorn, then hitchhiked back to Grosseto—just in time for chow.

Returning to the States with the 47th at war's end and discharged as sergeant. Graduated from Syracuse Univ. in New York and became FBI agent in February 1951. Retired out of Miami, FL in December 1979.

In September 1954 he married Joan Quigg, Brooklyn, NY and has seven children (all now on their own).

He conducts private investigations, mostly business-related, throughout the US, Central and South America, the Caribbean, UK and Europe.

EDDIE E. WEIDEL, born April 30, 1917, at Flatonia, TX. Graduated from Flatonia HS in 1936 and from St. Mary's Univ. in San Antonio, TX with a BS in commerce. Enlisted in the USAF on Jan. 5, 1942; graduated from Gunnery School at Las Vegas, NV; assigned to 47th BG, 85th Sqdn. and ordered on maneuvers to High Point, NC.



Ordered overseas Oct. 9, 1942, and flew missions in the Tunisian Campaign, Malta, Sicily and the Italian mainland. Completed 52 combat missions, the last mission was outside of Rome.

Received the EAME Campaign Medal w/4 Bronze Stars, Good Conduct Medal, Air Medal w/4 OLCs and GOI HQ NATBF July 1, 1943.

Back to the States and married his fiancée Gladys Duke on Feb. 22, 1944. He was discharged Sept. 3, 1945. That day his wife Gladys and two step-sons, Ray and David Stewart, came to pick him up. As they left the base their car radio was playing, *Highways are Happy Ways when they lead the way to Home*.

GEORGE W. WELLS, born July 25, 1915, Plant City, FL. Attended George Washington Univ. and Univ. of Florida BS in mechanical engineering. Was a civilian engineer for the Air Corps at Wright Field, Dayton 1939-41. Enlisted April 3, 1941, Flying Cadets (engineering). Trained at New York Univ. and Air Corps Technical School, Rantoul, IL.



Reported to 47th BG, Municipal Airport, Sacramento, CA on Dec. 21, 1941. Assigned to 84th Sqdn., Fresno, CA on Jan. 6, 1942, and served with group through England, Morocco, Algiers, Tunisia, Malta, Sicily, Italy, and Southern France.

Awarded Bronze Star, Presidential Citations and Theater Medals. Inactive duty on Sept. 25, 1945, Major, USAFR, RET. General Eisenhower's visit at Youks Les Bains and Mount Vesuvius eruption are memorable events.

Employed with Federal Aviation Administration 29 years as aeronautical engineer and licensed commercial pilot with instrument rating.

He has two children and four grandchildren.

CLARENCE TAYLOR WESTBROOK enlisted in January 1942. Served in 84th Sqdn., medical crew at Fresno, CA; Will Rogers Field, OK; Greensboro, SC; Casablanca; Youks Les Bains; and rest of Mediterranean Theater.



Discharged as corporal in October 1945. Presently working as trucking and logging contractor.

Married Kathryn and has three children: James Tomasini, Deborah Westbrook and Cindy Hoffman; five grandchildren: Tyler Tomasini, Mark Tomasini, Catherine Weldon, Devon Weldon, Cody Hoffman; and one great-grandchild.

MARSHALL V. WHITE, born Sept. 14, 1921, at Crandon, WI. Attended Crandon HS and enlisted in US Army on Jan. 6, 1942. After basic training at Sheppard Field, Wichita Falls, TX, he was assigned to 47th BG, HQ Sqdn., at Will Rogers Field, OK. Sent to Harlingen, TX for Gunnery School, then rejoined 47th BG, 84th Sqdn. at Greensboro, NC.

Left for England in November 1942, then on to the North African Campaign, Sicily and Italy. Returned to the States in March 1944 and was discharged on Sept. 8, 1945 with rank of staff sergeant. Earned the Air Medal w/4 clusters, Presidential Unit Citation for Kasserine Pass action, Mediterranean Campaign Ribbon, Good Conduct Ribbon, Victory Medal and Liberation Medals from France and Italy.

Self-employed in logging, sawmill and tim-



ber business until retiring in 1981. Married Emilda Barnowsky in 1944 and has five children, 13 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

RAYMOND C. WHITNEY, a pilot with the 97th Sqdn. from December 1944 until the European War ended. His crew flew 35 missions with Lt. Herbert Tauherg, bombardier, and Harold McBee and Ronald Sawyer, gunner-observers. They joined the squadron at Rosignano, then to Grosseto and Pisa. Major Neuer was his first CO and later had Col. Taylor. His crew flew the first mission out of Pisa in #97, a beautiful A-20B.

After V-E Day took some Shoran training in B-25s and was assigned to fly an A-26 home via the southern route. Sgt. Gall, crew chief; Sgt. Schneider, radio man; and pilots, Lt. Murray and Lt. Warren, accompanied him on that memorable trip.

Separated from service at Goldsboro, NC. Went into a gasoline and heating oil company with his brother in Dexter, ME, and is now retired. Married, he has one son.

BUFORD E. WIMBERLEY (WIMPY), enlisted three times with the first on April 22, 1941. Stationed at Hamilton Field, CA; Recruit 47th BG, Fresno AB, 97th Sqdn., 47th BG; and participated in two tours in Korea with 4th Ftr. Gp., 98th BG.



Retired June 30, 1962, with the rank of tech sergeant. Awarded the EAME w/8 stars. Occupation Far East, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, Good Conduct w/5 loops, WWII Victory, American Defense, AAF Technician Badge, Korean Service Medal, Korean Presidential Citation, Distinguished Unit Badge and Longevity Service Award w/4 OLCs.

His memorable experience is having survived two wars as an armorer and the dangers faced. Most memorable was in Pisa, Italy when the 97th was separated from Group and operated singly with one of the best commanders he ever served under.

Served nine months with postal service, three years VA Hospital, six years Forest Service, six months in Vietnam, one year civilian supply warehouse, 10 year Omark Industries and retired in December 1984.

Divorced, he has three children: Barbara Gallant (retired from USAF), Susan Givens and Shirley Wimberley, and three children grandchildren: Ross Givens, Rolland Curtis Wimberley and Ford Wimberley Curtis.

LOUIS A. WINGO, born July 9, 1924, Shawnee, OK. Inducted in Army April 6, 1943, in San Diego, CA. Basic training at Atlantic City, NJ; Armament at Lowry Field, Denver, CO; Aerial Gunnery, Tyndall Field, FL; and on to Charlotte, NC to join the crew of Lt. Totten and Sgt. Ray Hall.



Shipped overseas April 18, 1944, and joined the 47th BG at Naples, Italy, by Mt. Vesuvius. Went up through Italy over to Corsica Island and to Southern France and back to Italy. Lost their pilot, Lt. Totten on the night of Dec. 24, 1944

Completed 60 missions and received Air Medal w/2 clusters. He was discharged Sept. 10, 1945.

Married Norma Jean Woodliff May 8, 1946, and has four children: Shirley, Sharon, Louie and Larry; seven grandchildren; and one great-grandson. After the service he spent most of his life as a building contractor in Escondido, CA.

THEODORE J. WIRGINIS, one of a certain few who earned the Distinguished Flying Cross as an enlisted bombardier. He had been in the Mediterranean for 18 months as an airplane mechanic when he volunteered to become a bombardier and subsequently flew 60 missions, 45 of which were night recce in the Po Valley of Italy.

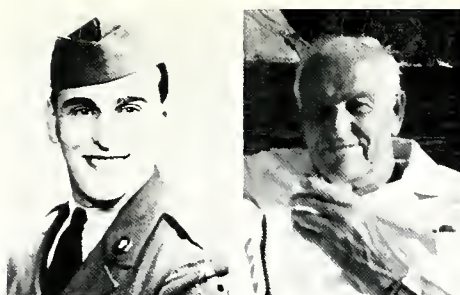
Also received three Air Medals. He spent four years in the USAC without a furlough. Every time he had a furlough coming, circumstances prevented it.

He lives in Cheswick, PA.

CLARENCE L. WITHERS JR., born Sept. 11, 1918, Mahanoy City, PA. Enlisted June 3, 1941 in the USAAC and was assigned to the 47th BG at Hamilton Field, CA. Joined the 85th BS at Fresno, CA and went to England on advance party for pre-invasion of North Africa. Spent approximately three years overseas during WWII and made every rank from private to master sergeant as armament chief.

Received the Bronze Star Medal for the campaign in North Africa. After discharge, he enlisted in the Pennsylvania Air Guard and received a direct commission as 2nd lieutenant armament officer in the 148th Ftr. Sqdn. The unit was activated during the Korean War and opened up Dover AFB. Deployed to Naha, Okinawa with 4th Ftr. Sqdn. (F-94).

Remained in the Air Guard in full-time capacity, changing his career field from armament systems to civil engineer and went to AF Civil



Engineering School. Advanced in grade from 2nd lieutenant to lieutenant colonel, serving as commander of 193rd Cbt. Spt. Sqdn. and finally as commander of the 201st Red Horse Sqdn., retiring in 1978 at age 60 with 37 years service. Received the AF Commendation Medal and Meritorious Medal.

Married to Catharine and has two children, Scott and Kathleen, and two grandchildren, Steven and Colleen.

LESTER M. WOLLARD (LUCKY), born May 31, 1919, Royalton, IL, and moved to California in 1924. Enlisted in the USAAC in December 1941; assigned to 47th Feb. 1, 1942 Fresno, CA, as aerial gunner with 84th Sqdn.



Sent to Casablanca and across North Africa to Island of Malta, Sicily, to HQ Sqdn. as weather person and went up through Italy with the war. Was with the 47th on Corsica, went into Southern France and back to Italy until V-E Day.

Shipped to States and granted his first home leave, where he was on V-J Day. Discharged in September 1945.

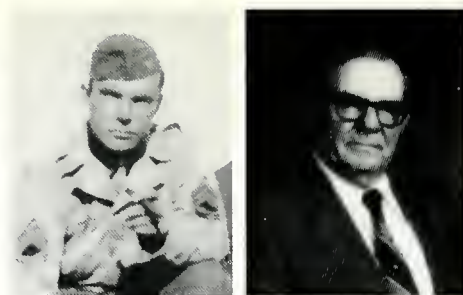
Held many odd jobs as artist, a cowboy in Wyoming, ferried air planes, served as clerk and supervisor in post office and retired with only 20 years (disability).

Married Frances in 1953. They have one daughter Jackie, three grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Moved to Utah in 1971 and was ordained into the ministry and did radio ministry for eight years. At Quartzsite, AZ in the 1980s and served as temporary pastor, Southern Baptist, a short time.

Currently preaching and teaching as fill in; does weekly Bible column in local paper; and serves as Veterans chaplain, and chaplain emeritus for 47th reunion group.

CHARLIE F. WOOD, born in Randolph County, Roanoke, AL on April 24, 1921. Enlisted in the USAAC in October 1940; taking basic training at Jefferson Barracks; then assigned to 17th BG at McChord Field, Tacoma, WA in January 1941. Later in 1941 a cadre was formed with personnel from the 17th and moved to Fresno, CA where the 47th BG was formed. He was assigned to the 86th BS as an aircraft mechanic



Stayed with the 86th BS through the war from 1941 until discharged in 1945. Re-enlisted in the USAF in 1947 and retired in 1973 with the rank of chief master sergeant.

After retiring from service, he attended Patterson Technical College for two years and in 1975 set up his own business in heating and air conditioning. Currently, semi-retired from the heating and a/c business to the golf course.

Married for 46 years and has two children and six grandchildren.

RUSSELL C. WORCHEL (RUSS), born March 3, 1923, Granton, WI. Entered the service in March 1943; attended basic at Miami Beach, FL; airplane mechanics at Seymour Johnson Field, NC; aerial gunnery at Buckingham AAF, Ft. Myers, FL and combat crew training on A-20 Havoc at Florence, SC.



Pilot Kocher, Navigator Andreotti and Engineer Worchel were assigned plane and departed for Savannah, GA on Aug. 6, 1944. They flew the southern route, stopping in Costa Rica; Belam and Natal, Brazil; Africa; and Ascension Islands. Joined the 47th BG on Island of Corsica on Aug. 13, 1944, and assigned to 97th Bomb Squad.

Flew missions from Corsica, Southern France and several bases in Italy, completing 60 combat missions. Awarded Air Medal w/3 OLCs and EAME Ribbon w/5 Bronze Stars. Memorable experience was 17 day liberty ship trip, docking in Newport News on June 13, 1945. Left service Sept. 21, 1945, with rank of staff sergeant.

Served as safety consultant to insurance company and is past-president of Wisconsin Chapter of American Society of Safety Engineers.

Married Oct. 27, 1945, to Audrey and has a son Roger.

HOWARD C. WORLEY, born Aug. 8, 1922, in Wilkes Barre, PA. Graduate of GAR Memorial HS and enlisted in the USAF in 1941 and assigned to the 85th Sqdn., 47th BG. Was with the 85th Sqdn. at Hamilton Field, Fresno, CA; Lowry Field, CO; Will Rogers Field, OK; Highpoint, NC; England, North Africa; Malta; Sicily; and Rome, Italy.

Returned to the States and was assigned to the 603rd Air Engr. Sqdn., 509th BG at Wendover



Field, UT, where they altered the bomb bay of B-29s to carry the atomic bombs. May 1945 was re-assigned to overseas duty on the Island of Tinian, assisting in loading both atomic bombs. Having more points than anyone else in the group, he was sent back to the States for discharge at Fort Douglas, UT in September 1945.

After his discharge he became a bricklayer by trade, giving him the opportunity to travel to Japan to install steamboilers. During his visit to Japan he visited both Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Joined the Naval Reserves in 1946, returning to active duty in 1956 as an ordnance man, retiring with a medical discharge in 1960.

Awards include the Purple Heart, European Theater, Asiatic Theater, American Defense, Good Conduct Medal, Victory Medal and Unit Citation.

Joined the postal service as a clerk in 1962, retired from the postal service as postmaster in 1987. He keeps active and has been able to attend every reunion of the 85th Sqdn. to date.

Married Anne (deceased), children: Sandra, Gerrie, Tom and Kim; married Pauline, children: Debbie, Linda, Jim, Sandy, Bob and Karen; and 19 grandchildren.

HAROLD (HAL) O. WRIGHT, joined the 47th in Fresno, CA in 1942 after volunteering for service in Ft. Meade, MD. Dec. 31, 1941. Went to Wichita, TX, then to Fresno to join the 47th, to Will Rogers AFB, OK, where he did most of his training. Originally attached to the 97th Sqdn., but soon transferred to HQ where he spent the next three years. A sergeant in communications and he did some flying, but mainly was involved in communications of all kinds: tower operations, ground radio, etc.

After flying, he was very active in writing documentations in connection with any court marshal activities (very little of that in the 47th); and then became the writer of short stories about 47th men to their home papers if and when they would do something outstanding for which they received awards, etc. That, generally, were his activities for the four years in the Air Force (then the Army Air Corps). He was discharged in North Carolina in October 1945.

Went to college and became a CPA, he has his own firm and will stay in practice for as long as he can. Married to Sue and has three daughters: Jacquelyn, JoAnn and Jessica (an RN), and four grandchildren. They live on the outskirts of Baltimore where they have lived for over 25 years.

TONY YKEMA, born March 14, 1920, Rock Valley, IA. Graduated Hawarden HS and enlisted in the USAAC on Nov. 26, 1940. Assigned to 84th Sqdn., 47th BG on Feb. 28, 1941, as general office clerk. Assigned to HQ as administrative non-commissioned officer, Sept. 5, 1942.

Overseas duty began Jan. 14, 1943; arrived in Casablanca on the 25th and served in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, Corsica and France. Returned to States July 11, 1945.

Completed his military service as staff sergeant on Aug. 24, 1945. Entered banking in Oklahoma City in 1945; church business manager in Oklahoma City in 1957; bank property manager, Phoenix, AZ, September 1972; and thereafter bank trust officer until retirement in April 1988.

Married Wanda Raulston July 23, 1945, and reared two children. He presently resides in Tempe, AZ.

DAVID E. YOUNG, born April 14, 1918. Graduated from Kansas Univ. in 1940 with BS in mechanical engineering. Attended flying schools in California; commissioned in Class 42-A; and assigned to 97th Sqdn. of 47th BG in spring of 1942.



Overseas to England in September 1942; Africa in November 1942; and flew 63 missions in Africa and Italy.

Awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal. Was operations officer of Morris Field, fall of 1944 and operations officer of Moody Field, 1945. Left the service in November 1945 as a lieutenant colonel.

Returned to Servel, Inc. of Evansville, IN. Left Servel in 1950 and joined Columbia Gas System in Columbus, OH, retiring in 1980 as a vice president of the company.

Married Helen Heard in April 1942. They have two children, Christine and John Timothy, and five grandchildren: Maggie and Jeff (Christine's children), and Ned, Liza and Mac (Tim's children).

WILLIAM R. YOUNG, entered the USAAC on July 12, 1941, as a flying cadet. Primary flying training at Tex Rankin Academy, CA; basic at Gardner Field, CA; advanced at Luke Field, AZ; and commissioned 2nd lieutenant on Feb. 6, 1942.

Posted to the 303rd BG(H) at Boise, ID; transferred to the 47th BG(L) at Oklahoma City. Trained with the 47th at Greensboro, NC; deployed to England via the North Atlantic through Greenland and Iceland. Flew south and landed at Youks Les Bains; flew against the Africa Corps

in Kasserine Pass and continued missions throughout the African campaign, flew against Panteliera and moved up to Gela in Sicily.

Made landing at Salerno and completed 50 missions. Assigned to 12th AF and made the landing at Anzio; helped plan the invasion of Southern France and was in combat operations through Montilmar, Valance, Amberieux, St. Dezier and Belfort Gap. Reassigned to the 27th Ftr. Gp. and assigned squadron commander of the 524th Sqdn.

Received regular commission in 1947; served with 33rd, 81st and 31st Ftr. Gps.; spent three years with the 406th Ftr. Gp. in England; transferred to SAC in 1956, then to SAC HQ as inspector general, Operations.

Retired Jan. 31, 1963, returned to banking as VP commercial loan officer, U.S. Bank, Portland, OR, and retired Jan. 31, 1973.

Met Peggy Green (Red Cross girl) at Mannheim and they were married Oct. 10, 1945, at Weinhiem, Germany. They have four daughters: a medical doctor, a PHD teaching graduate English and two are registered nurses, and four grandchildren.

MARVIN S. ZIPP, stationed at Marianna, FL in August of 1945. Assumed command of the 47th BG; transferred to Lake Charles at the same time B.B. Taylor, Leo Fielder, Ray Sampson and George Lanning were ordered there from a training outfit at Marianna.



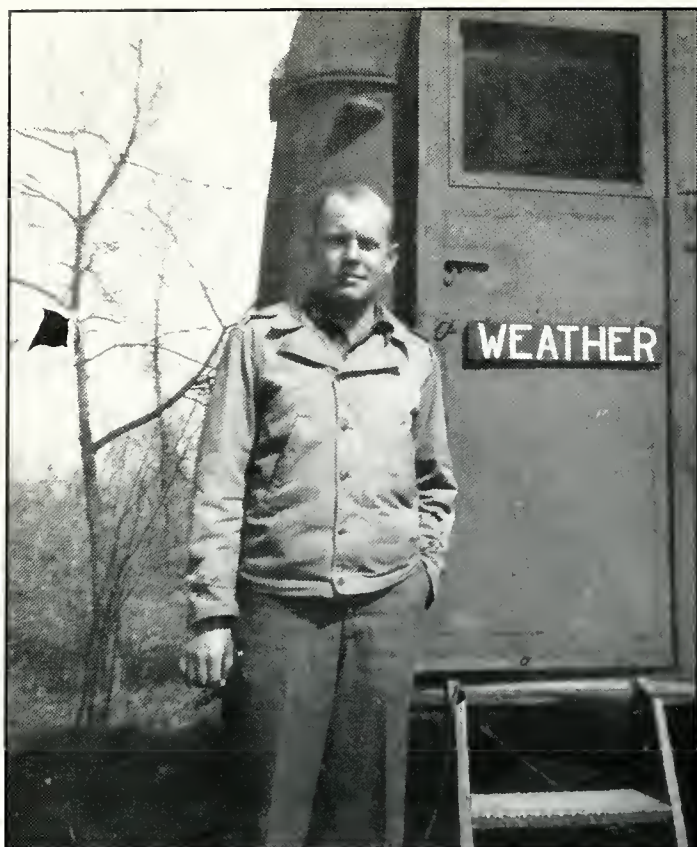
The 47th was to be designated as a "Pathfinder" outfit for duty against the Japanese. Their mission was to identify and to drop markers of flares on targets which were to then be attacked by following B-29s.

He was ordered to fly to all bases which were conducting A-26 training and to meet with groups of interested pilots and to "sign up" those of his choice. The majority were already theatre veterans. The same process was to take place at "repl-depots" where outstanding senior enlisted men were met by his representatives and encouraged to volunteer for duty with the 47th. The result was one approaching that of a "Commanders Dream."

His background was that of a flying cadet from Hartford, CT, from the Kelly graduating class of February 1938. Overseas service had been limited to a short campaign in the Aleutian Islands as commander of a group of A-24 dive bombers operating from Amchitka against the Japanese in Kiska in concert with other 11th AF Units.

His 47th Gp. deputy was B.B. Taylor, one class behind him at the Flying School. He had already concluded a tour with the 12th AF flying A-20s in Italy. He died in April of 1992 of leukemia.

They were overtaken by V-J Day and he was sent to the 10th Recce Group in Furth, Germany and the rest of the boys to all points of the compass.



Weather office of weather sergeant Lester "Lucky" Wollard, and Captain Walt Snyder. Photo was taken near Naples, Italy, Feb. 1944. (Courtesy of Lester "Lucky" Wollard)



A-26 aircraft. On top: Lt. Col. Marion S. Akers, C.O. of 86th Squadron. At nose: 1st Lt. Joseph T. Bitzko, Squadron Bombardier/Navigator officer. Under wing: S/Sgt. Earl Porter, April 1945. (Courtesy of Joe Bitzko)



Lt. Barr, L. W. Skinner, Capt. Hedges, Italy 1944. (Courtesy of L. W. Skinner)



Malta. From L to R: Krugh, Botts, Stedman, July-August 1943.

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A-20B number 22, 84th Squadron Pilot, Ted Broman; Top gunner Jack Botts; Bottom gunner, Wilbert Welch; Nose Passenger, Lucky Wollard, second mission. (Courtesy of Lester "Lucky" Wollard)



Crash on takeoff, Rosignano, Italy. Plane stopped on top of railroad tracks. (Courtesy of G. L. Gaudreault)





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